ROTUNDA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

volume 38:number 3
2006 spring

Charles Trick Currelly

In commemoration of the refurbishment of the ROM's historical Philosophers' Walk wing, a look back at the Museum's remarkable history and the man who started it all.

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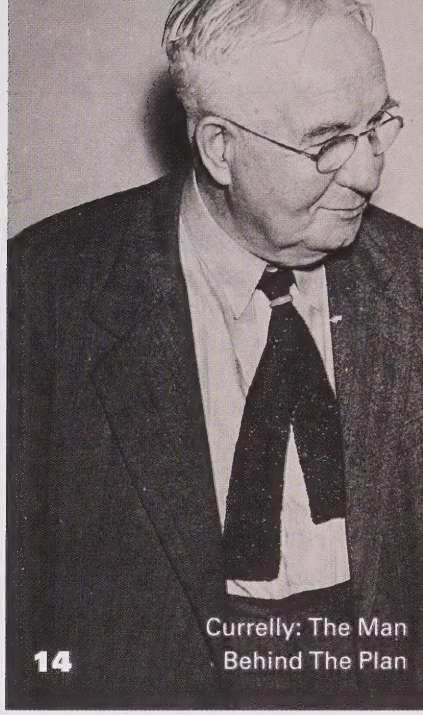

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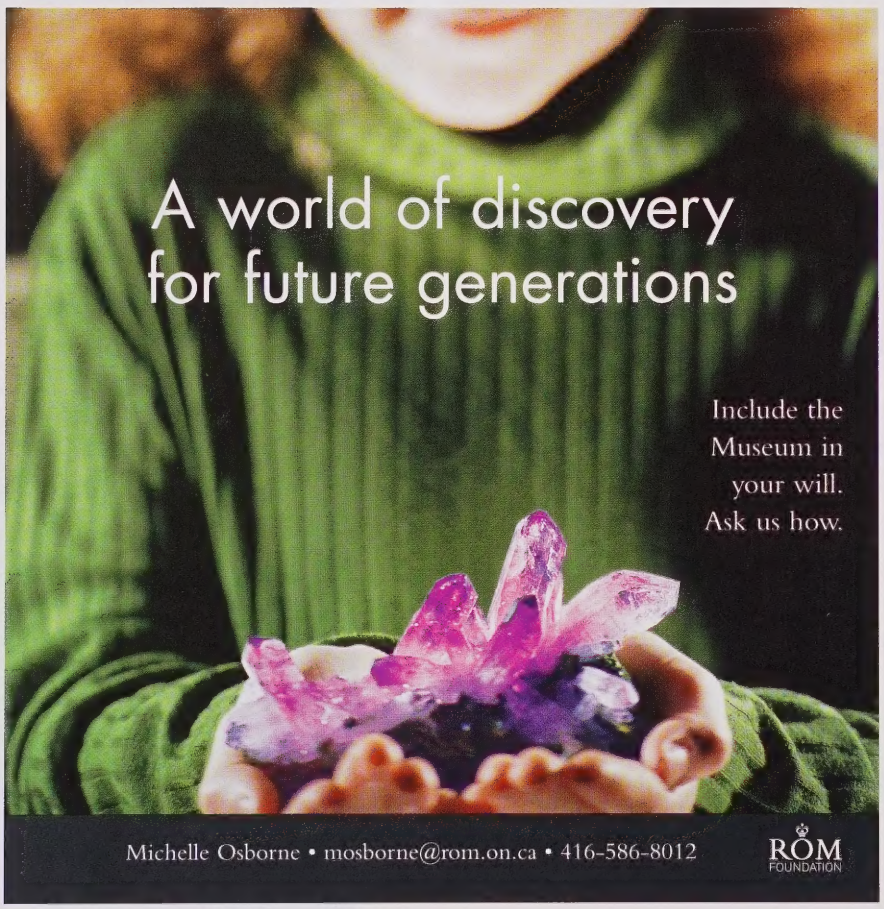

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THE ROM'S MISSION
IS TO INSPIRE WONDER
AND BUILD UNDERSTANDING
OF HUMAN CULTURES
AND THE NATURAL WORLD.

ROM MESSAGE

Nothing compares with a curator's commentary on an object or collection. In almost every case, it's like an adventure story, bringing life and meaning to beautiful but inanimate things—a little wow in almost every corner, a big wow in several others.

How do we offer the luxury of a curator to millions of visitors who ponder the material evidence of a culture's beliefs or nature's complexity in our galleries? The answer is text, graphics, audio guides, television commentaries, and guided tours, supplemented by catalogues and books. And in the Learning Centre, where students come for organized visits, we can add digital imagery and a chance to actually handle bones, bats, or berets.

Audio guides are probably the most effective and flexible tools to provide context for what visitors see in the galleries. In the past, the ROM has offered audio guides for special exhibitions, but not for its permanent collections. With Renaissance ROM, that is about to change.

ROM curators and programmers are now preparing scripts for a wide variety of audio tours of the Museum in diverse languages. You may wish to explore the Chinese galleries in depth, or take the highlight audio tour of the entire Museum. You may prefer a theme—"sex and death in nature and culture," "tomb treasures," "great philanthropists," or "the engineering and architecture tour of the ROM's facilities."

Over time, audio tours can take you or a child through the Museum in myriad ways, with a sense of adventure, humour, and depth. And audio tours can speak in any language—a boon to a place such as Toronto, where tourists are as likely to come from Shanghai as Saskatoon.

Technology is also expanding the means by which audio tours can be delivered. Soon, you may be able to download your preferred tour from the Internet onto a personal wireless device. Indeed, you will purchase your ticket to the Museum, make reservations for lunch, sign up for a seminar, and, of course, contribute thousands of dollars to your favourite Museum department on the Internet. At *rom.on.ca* you can even revisit a special exhibition that you loved three years ago, or peruse a selection of 5000 photographs from the ROM's collections.

AUDIO GUIDES ARE PROBABLY THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE TOOLS TO PROVIDE CONTEXT FOR WHAT VISITORS SEE IN THE GALLERIES. IN THE PAST, THE ROM HAS OFFERED AUDIO GUIDES FOR SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS, BUT NOT FOR ITS PERMANENT COLLECTIONS. WITH RENAISSANCE ROM, THAT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

We are also developing gallery guides and books to deepen intellectual access. With the support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust, we produced *High Style* this year, featuring Bernard and Sylvia Ostry's collection of Art Deco, Art Nouveau, and Arts and Crafts objects at the ROM.

New catalogues are underway for the first of our 27 new permanent galleries, as well as temporary exhibitions covering Lalique glass and the Korean art of Gisan. The new ROM Museum Store on Bloor Street will feature a book and media section with a wide variety of ROM publications, including field guides and research studies. In sum, there will be an unprecedented ROM library developed for public sale and use over the next 10 years.

But none of this matches the humanity of a personally guided tour. Naturally, we will continue to offer tours through the exceptionally well-informed docents in the ROM's Department of Museum Volunteers. These are an essential part of Museum life.

We may also broaden that program to include the opportunity to purchase private tours, and sometimes idiosyncratic explorations of the Museum given by individuals with particular passions. Imagine accompanying an artist who perceives certain linkages throughout the galleries as a kind of installation artwork—say at midnight, followed by drinks in our new rooftop bistro/bar. The ROM has the capacity to surprise in surprising ways.

These programs of intellectual access and stimulation will unfold with the opening of the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal in late 2006. There will also be additional forums for social interaction and engagement in the ROM's new public spaces, including music, film, and dance.

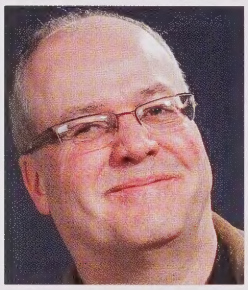
The muse is alive and well in the Museum, a place for the curious as well as curiosities.

William Thorsell is director and Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Ontario Museum.

CONTRIBUTORS

Kei Yamamoto
University of Toronto

KEI ("The Excavator's Digs") is a Ph.D. candidate in Egyptian archaeology within the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto.



Arthur Smith
ROM Library

ARTHUR ("From Dream to Reality: A ROM Retrospective"), librarian at the ROM, specializes in collections development and management. His research interests include archival sources relating to the ROM's Oceania collections. His contribution to *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples* was published in Autumn 2005 by the University of Toronto Press. His earlier research has appeared in *Acadiensis* and *The Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*. One of his long-term projects is the transcription of the journals of the Rev. Joseph Annand, a 19th-century missionary and collector from Nova Scotia, who spent 40 years in the South Pacific and contributed to the ROM's ethnographical collections. Arthur is also the principal bibliographer of prolific Canadian author Will R. Bird.

Julia Matthews
ROM Library and Archives

JULIA ("The Right Man in the Right Place at the Right Time") spent the first quarter of her life in Ottawa, where the national museums were then all under one roof. Following graduate studies in Toronto, she worked at OISE, TVO, and the Council of Ontario Universities. She purchased a copy of Charles Trick Currelly's memoir *I Brought the Ages Home* for 25 cents when Ryerson Press had a sale at Varsity Stadium. In 1983, she joined the ROM as head librarian, and her responsibilities for archival records brought her into contact with CTC again. Lately, she was able to obtain from the CBC an hour's tribute broadcast from 1960, which confirmed some impressions of Currelly and provided new information.

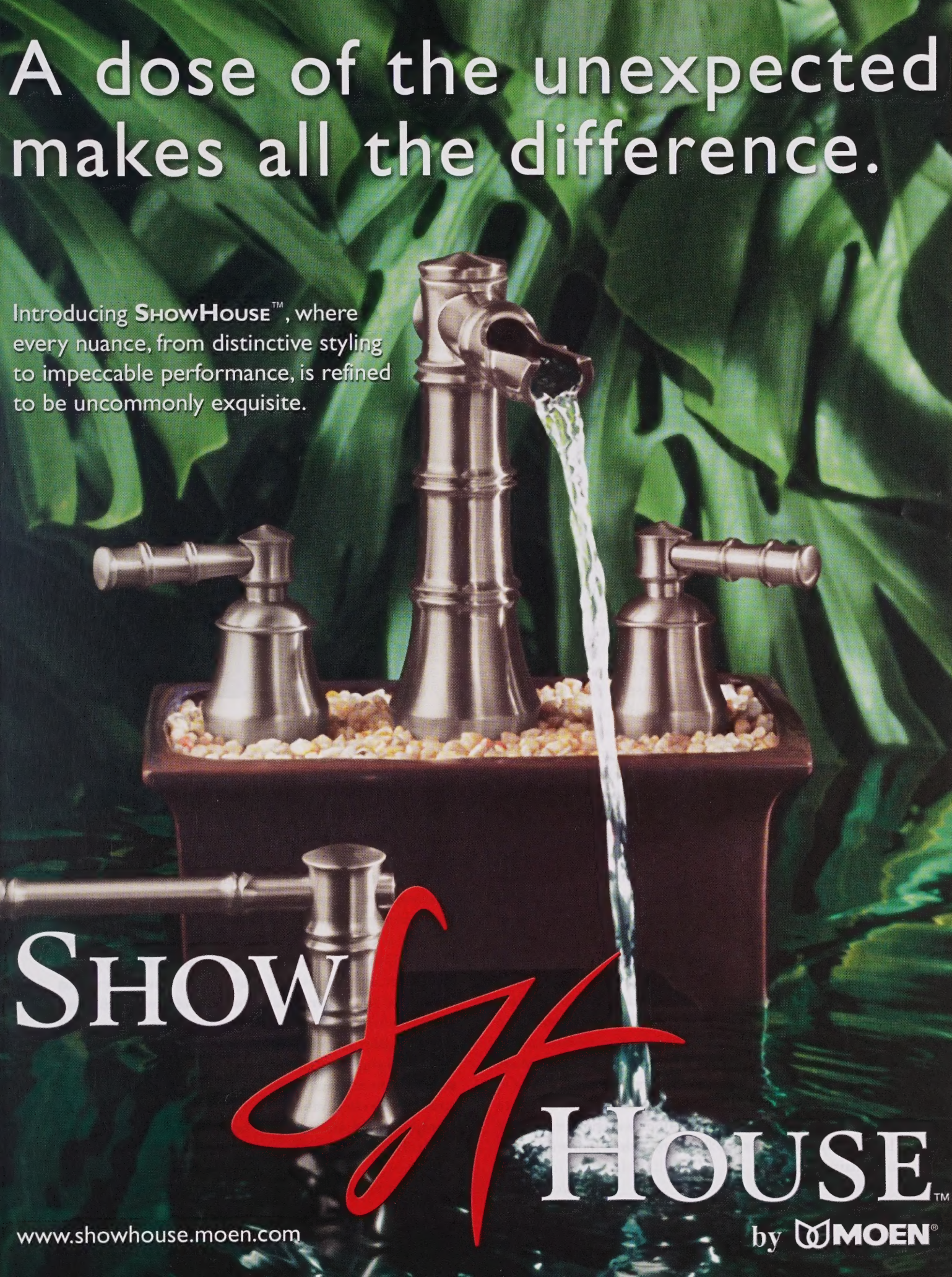
Lee-Anne Jack
ROM Governors

LEE-ANNE ("Man on a Mission") has a Bachelor of Applied Arts in journalism and has worked on a variety of ROM newsletters since joining the ROM in 1994. Since 1998, she has been editor of *Rotunda* magazine. The Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art has been a favourite of hers for many years.

CORRECTION

In the winter 2005/6 issue of *Rotunda*, on page 21, an English alabaster sculpture of St. Catherine was noted as having oddities in the surcoat and tippet. The note should have referred to the early 16th-century St. Catherine figure (top), not the 15th-century one (bottom) as published. The height of the waistline of the 16th-century St. Catherine, as well as the general breadth across the upper part of the body, could reflect influences of contemporary fashionable dress from as late as the 1520s to 1530s.

Information not previously printed about the 15th-century figure is that it has been slightly shortened at the base, and is missing the splay of drapery and terrain base normally seen at the bottom of English alabaster depictions of female saints.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EXPLORA

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / M47143

Shade Shifter

"Emerald" by day, "amethyst" by night

RECENTLY, the ROM acquired a fabulous 13.35-carat alexandrite gemstone. Known as the colour-change variety of the mineral chrysoberyl, natural alexandrite is found at only a few localities in the world, and gemstones of more than 5 carats in weight are rare. Originally, alexandrite was discovered in the early 1800s in the Ural Mountains. Some accounts suggest that the first specimen was found on the birthday of Czar Alexander II of Russia, in 1818. This gem variety was certainly named in his honour.

Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, the ROM's wonderful alexandrite gem is the generous gift of Mr. Vincent Massey Tovell, O.C., donated in honour of Dr. Walter Massey Tovell, scholar and teacher of geology, president of the Toronto Field Naturalists (1957–1958), head of Geology at the ROM (1964–1972), and ROM director (1973–1975), who passed away in December. Like all specimens of alexandrite, the ROM's example has the unusual property of exhibiting a change in colour that depends on lighting conditions. In daylight (or under daylight-spectrum fluorescent light) it is green, but it changes to a red or violet shade under incandescent light. Chrysoberyl is composed of beryllium, aluminum, and oxygen, and in its pure form it is colourless. But with a bit of chromium as an impurity in just the right concentration, we get the variety alexandrite. The colour change in alexandrite results from the slightly different energies of light sources, and the wavelengths of light that are absorbed and/or transmitted by the gemstone.

Look for the ROM's new alexandrite and other exquisite gems in the new Gem and Gold Room, a section in the Inco Limited Gallery of Earth's Treasures, when it opens as part of Renaissance ROM.

—Malcolm Back

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / ROM 57226

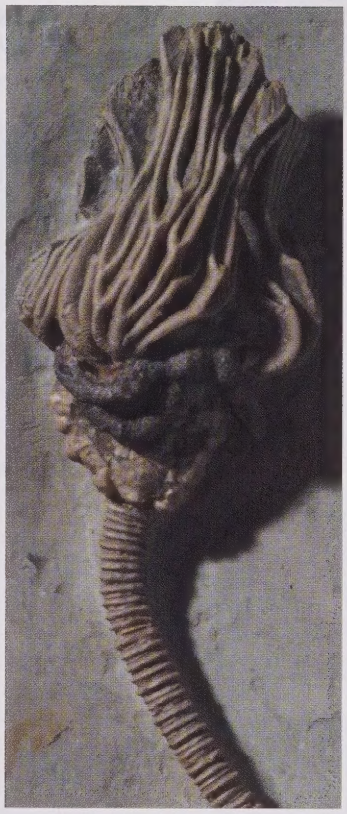
"Bouquet

Seven stunni

MOST MODERN crinoids—sea-dwelling invertebrate animals related to the more familiar starfish, spiny urchins, and sand dollars—are called "feather stars" and live as active crawlers and swimmers around tropical reefs. But a few kinds live in deeper, colder waters, tethered to the sea floor by a long multi-segmented stalk. Because of their vaguely flower-like appearance, these crinoids are often referred to as "sea-lilies."

Stalked sea-lilies have a long and distinctive fossil record. Disarticulated pieces of their complex mineralized skeletons are common fossils in sedimentary rocks of Ordovician through Permian age (between about 470 and 250 million years ago), but because of their fragile nature, complete specimens of crinoids are seldom preserved intact. Under unusual circumstances, however, entire local populations were occasionally killed and buried with minimal damage. The superb example illustrated here, purchased in 2005 with

T I O N S



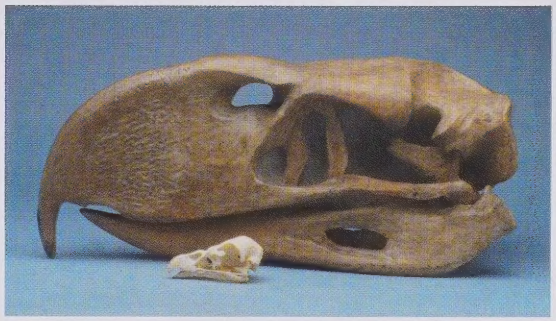
of Sea-lilies

ossil animals

the generous support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust, comes from a world-famous fossil crinoid locality in the Edwardsville Formation, near Crawfordsville, Indiana. Seven exceptionally well preserved crinoids, representing five different species, are arrayed across the slab surface—more or less as they died and came to rest on the sea floor under a blanket of rapidly deposited muddy sediment. The largest is a specimen of *Actinocrinites* with an articulated stalk nearly 60 cm (23½ inches) long.

On the same slab are two excellent specimens of *Platycrinites* retaining lengthy sections of their peculiar flattened and twisted stems. Four other smaller crinoids represent three species of *Abrotocrinus* and *Cydrocrinus*. Also present are fossil corals, snails, and a brittle starfish. This slab is destined to be the central highlight of a display of Late Paleozoic marine life in the Earth and Early Life Gallery, which will open in 2007 as part of Renaissance ROM.

—Dave Rudkin



BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / TERROR BIRD ROM 28807, BALD EAGLE ROM 111210

Winged Terror

Giant flightless bird grew taller than humans

DURING THE GREAT Age of Mammals, after the dinosaurs' extinction 65 million years ago, many kinds of mammals evolved, including the *Uintatherium* featured in the last issue of *Rotunda*. At the same time, birds were evolving into many and varied types. Several were huge flightless species that grew to sizes larger than some of the dinosaurs during the Cretaceous! (Of course, we know now that birds evolved from a group of terrestrial dinosaurs, and did not become extinct at the end of the Cretaceous. So in a way, dinosaurs never became extinct, but live on in the form of birds.)

The ROM has a cast skull from one of these huge flightless birds. It has never before been on display at the Museum. Distantly related to cranes, these birds are often called "terror birds" because of their large size and, in particular, their enormous beaks. The skull shown above, of *Phorusrhacos longissimus*, was found in Argentina in rock deposits 15 million years old. It is shown beside the skull of a bald eagle for size comparison. This species is thought to have grown to almost 3 metres (almost 10 feet) in height. The cast will be featured in the South American section of the Age of Mammals Gallery.

—Kevin Seymour

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THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF
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Sacred Beauty

A spectacular reliquary from ancient Gandhara once held precious remains of the past.

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 2004.89.1.1-6

In September 2004, the ROM acquired an exquisite Buddhist reliquary from Gandhara (part of modern-day Pakistan), dating to the second or third century.

A receptacle for holding relics, the ROM's reliquary is moulded into the form of a *stupa*. For centuries the stupa was the most important monument in ancient Buddhist architecture. The first ones were built to store the Buddha's ashes and relics, following an established custom in ancient India to erect a funerary mound over the relics of a great ruler.

In Buddhist terms, stupas symbolize *mahaparinirvana*, or final and perfect Nirvana, the release from the cycle of *samsara*, or reincarnation. The stupa's architectural structure—composed of a base, a round drum, a hemispherical dome, and a superstructure consisting of a mast with varying numbers of umbrellas, called *chatras*—was perceived as a model of the cosmos. Symbolically, it represented the body

DAVID JONGEWARD

The base of the inner reliquary is 4.8 cm (less than 2 inches) in diameter and 1.5 cm (1/2 inch) deep. Concentric incised grooves decorate the base and dome. An embossed lotus-petal design radiates from the top and underside of each umbrella. The umbrella tops are also embossed with lines filled with miniscule gold beadwork.

The outer reliquary is 7 cm (2-3/4 inches) in diameter and 4.7 cm (less than 2 inches) deep. Together, the base and dome form an interior space about 10 cm (4 inches) high—just large enough to house the inner container. The bottom of the mast serves as a tenon that fits neatly into the dome's socket.

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of the Buddha himself, as well as his ultimate achievement, Nirvana. The railings and gates, often elaborately decorated, surrounded the sacred structure in the four directions.

Perceived as being endowed with life, stupas were worshipped in the spirit of a tradition that equated the Master with his relics. According to Buddhist belief, after the Buddha's cremation (believed to date to the 4th century BCE), chiefs and Brahmins from several groups argued over their share of the Master's relics. But one respected Brahmin achieved concord by proposing to divide the relics into eight equal parts, with a stupa to be erected over each in the territory of the eight claimants. The story continues with Ashoka (273–232 BCE), the famous Indian king who converted to Buddhism. According to legend, Ashoka built 84,000 monasteries throughout his kingdom, vowing to distribute portions of relics from the original eight to all of the monasteries. No one knows whether he succeeded in fulfilling his vow.

In the following centuries, as the role of the stupa expanded, construction increased. Stupas were now built to commemorate important monks, disciples, and special events or deeds. The spread of Buddhism through India was marked by prolific construction of stupas, the remains of many thousands of which have been documented in the Peshawar Valley in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, an area known in ancient times as Gandhara. But no fully intact stupas have been discovered there. Two thousand years of history accompanied by waves of looting and vandalism during the rise and fall of several major civilizations have reduced most Gandharan monastery sites to rubble.

Fortunately, stupas were often reproduced in miniature form for use as reliquaries, as was the ROM's example. Many of these have been preserved in museums. Such artifacts have provided important insights into the cultural and religious life of the ancient period in India, including developments in the architecture of stupas as they spread through India, Central Asia, and China.

Many excavated stupa sites have yielded no relics, possibly because they were robbed. Nevertheless, the range of surviving objects includes far more than bone fragments or ash. Many reliquaries have contained coins, tiny gold or silver rosettes, pieces of earrings and necklaces, turquoise, quartz, garnet, coral, and glass beads.

The ROM's reliquary, acquired through the generous support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust, is an extremely fine example of the miniature stupa type. The stone outer container, made of grey-green schist, has a moulded base and drum hollowed out to form a shallow container. The superstructure has five umbrellas. The number is typical of stupas, and may represent Buddhism's five *tathagatas*, or gems.

Exquisitely crafted, the inner reliquary is made of crystal, gold, and pearl. From the crystal base hang 19 finely braided gold chains, each ending in a pearl and a gold leaf-shape pendant.

The *harmika*, a gold inverted stepped pyramid, has three tiers decorated with gold bead borders. On each of the four corners of the harmika's platform is a cluster of gold balls with tongues of flame. Three umbrellas made from thin sheet gold are arranged around the hollow gold mast.

Originally, this inner container would have contained bits of ash or bone, or bits of semi-precious and precious gemstone, though it is now empty. It was designed to fit perfectly inside the reliquary's outer stone container, which in turn would have been positioned in the centre of the actual burial stupa.

The reliquary is a stunning addition to the ROM's important Gandhara sculpture collection, which will be on permanent display in the new Christopher Ondaatje South Asian Gallery.

David Jongeward is an independent scholar and cultural historian. His catalogue of the ROM's collection of Gandhara sculpture was published in 2003.

Sex, Lies, and Roadkill

Invasion of the great greys.

ROM ornithology technician Glenn Murphy sorts through owl donations.

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

In northwestern Ontario, the invasion began in late September and early October 2004. The great predators were moving out of their boreal-forest breeding habitat and heading south. By late December impressive numbers had concentrated in several sites just south of the Canadian Shield, including Madoc, Orillia, Ottawa, and Whitby. The birding community was aflutter.

Winter birdwatching in Ontario may best be described as a little less than spectacular, so when big, beautiful great grey owls (*Strix nebulosa*) move into southern environs, people get excited. This unusual event was a wonderful opportunity to catch a glimpse of these northern visitors.

It had been eight years since the last great gray irruption—a large-scale, irregular movement of an animal outside breeding season into an area beyond its normal breeding range. And early indications hinted that this could be the biggest one yet. Irruption is not to be confused with migration, which refers to regular, seasonal movements of an animal from one location to another. In birds, irruptions occur in a number of boreal-forest species, including woodpeckers, chickadees, and several species of finches. Northern owl irruptions often occur during periods when northern small mammal populations "crash," causing owls to leave their normal breeding grounds in autumn and wander south in search of food.

MARK K. PECK

Although the great grey owl is found throughout boreal forests of Europe and North America, it has a special connection to Ontario. The species was first described to science from a specimen collected in 1772 in the extreme northwest of the province.

Great greys are the largest of the North American owls. Slightly larger in size than a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and snowy owl (*Bubo scandiaca*), they are much lighter, with most of their size being due to an abundance of feathers that provide the birds with excellent insulation for surviving cold winter temperatures. Great greys are easily identified by their large plate-sized face and bright yellow eyes and are considered a rare sight even for birders.

Despite the celebrity status this species enjoys in Ontario, its habits, distribution, and range remain somewhat of a mystery. Its breeding distribution is restricted to the expansive, usually roadless, bogs and muskegs of the coniferous boreal forests, where

SAM BARONE

A great grey owl prior to crossing the road.

fieldwork is difficult to conduct—travel costs are high and so are the numbers of mosquitoes and black flies.

Historically, the collective term for a group of owls is a "parliament," denoting a certain nobility and intelligence. When it comes to the "wise old owl," though, history has been very economical with the truth. Owls often hunt in ditches and fields along roadsides, seemingly unaware of the nearby dangers. Failure to look both ways when focused on a mouse or vole on the other side of the road can end badly for the owl, but does provide an opportunity for the ROM to acquire additional knowledge and increase its collection.

Museums collect in a number of ways, including public and private donations, bequests, purchases, exchanges with other institutions, fieldwork, and, occasionally, roadkill. An ornithologist can learn a lot from roadkill, but it is not the easiest or most pleasant collecting method. Spotting dead things beside the road at high speeds can be challenging. And convincing your spouse or friend to pull over and pick up carcasses requires sensitivity and artful negotiations.

A visit to the nearest Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) office for a Certificate of Reporting is necessary within five days of salvage to allow ministry staff to confirm that the raptor died of natural or other accidental causes. Once the certificate is signed, the bird may be taken to a taxidermist or donated to a museum.

Previous great grey owl invasions resulted in high numbers of roadside casualties, but very few museum specimens. With this in mind, ROM staff, working with the OMNR and the Ontario Field Ornithologists, sent out e-mails requesting great grey owl donations.

The plan was an alarming success. By the end of May 2005, 541 great grey

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owls were documented as being injured or killed in Ontario. Most of the owls died along roadsides, but the reports included owls that died in trap lines, and in collisions with trains, tractors, windows, and hydro lines. A few died of starvation or illness. The OMNR and the public donated more than 60 specimens to the ROM. With help from rehabilitation centres, bird banders, taxidermists, and interested members of the public, additional information on sex, moult, age, and diet was collected for many other owls.

Great grey owls are not easy to sex just by looking at them, so we internally sexed 100 of the specimens. We found that females outnumbered males almost two to one. One possible explanation for this is that males stay up north to defend their territory, while females have more freedom to move around. Whether the males were any more successful, we don't know. We analyzed stomach contents of the specimens and had a look at the diversity of prey the owls were feeding on. Meadow voles were the most common prey, but other prey species included star-nosed mole, hairy-tailed mole, short-tailed shrew, common shrew, and house mouse.

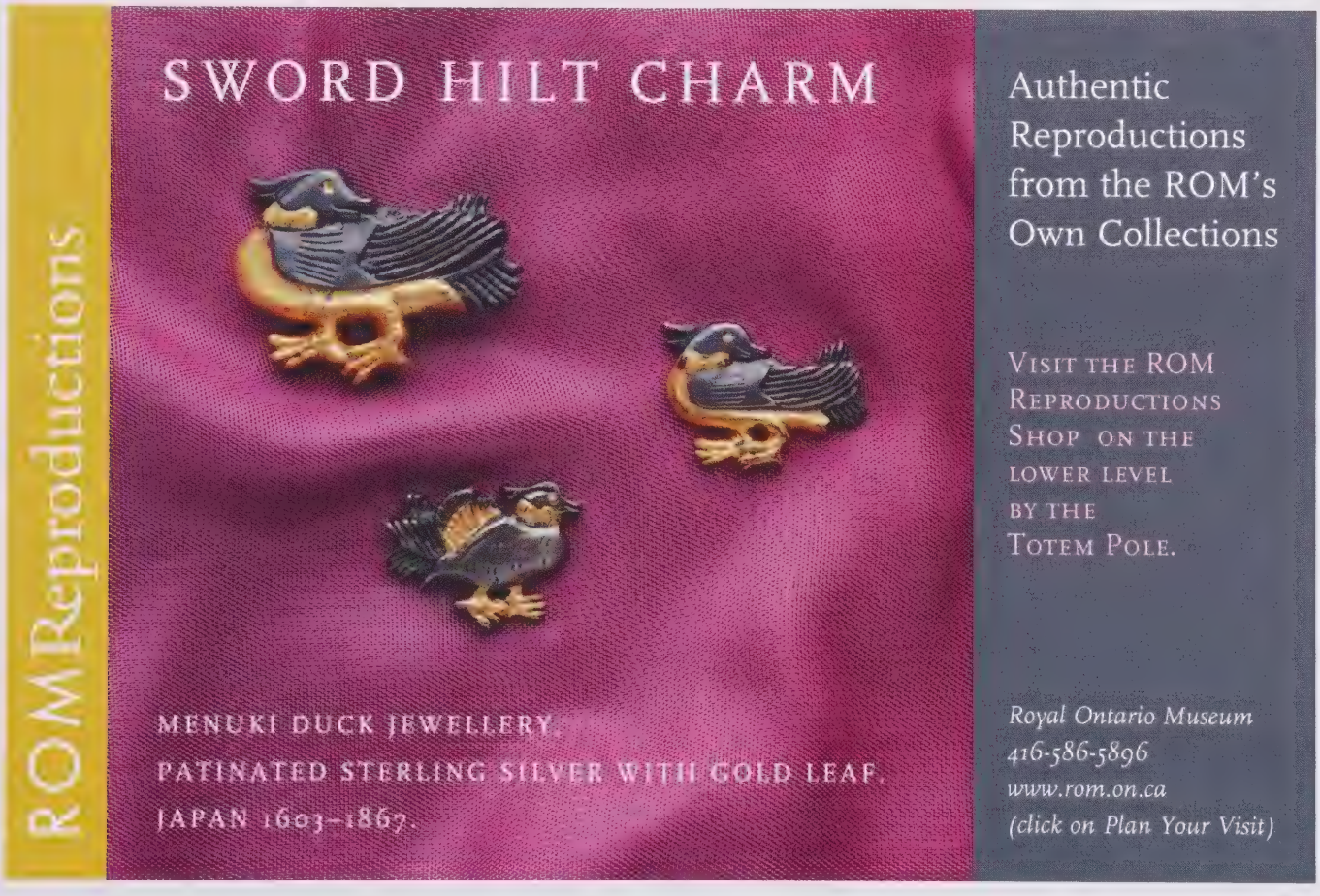
Last, but not least, we aged the owls. While most bird species moult all their feathers every year, owls moult only some feathers. Younger birds that have not moulted have very few new feathers, while older birds have many. Using photographs, bird-banding information, and specimens, we were able to estimate the age of 186 owls. The results were surprising. Only one first-year bird was found, implying that the small mammal crash occurred before the breeding season and was the cause for the lack of juveniles found in our sample.

Seventy-six percent of the birds were two to three years old, while the remaining birds were four years and older. It is unlikely these numbers accurately reflect the age structure of all great grey owls in the north. Younger birds moving out of suboptimal habitat is probably the usual situation during irruptions and provides further evidence for food stress as the likely cause. Older, more experienced birds occupying optimal habitat would be more likely to stay in the north.

By late March 2005 the surviving owls had headed back into the boreal forests. It had been the largest irruption ever recorded in southern Ontario. What impact the sex-biased casualties will have on the population is unknown.

From a museum perspective we were able to make the best of a bad situation. Tissue and feather samples will be made available for research on population and conservation issues. Several owls went to educational groups but most have been added to the ROM's collections. All will be used to teach present and future generations about this wonderful species.

Mark K. Peck is a technician in the Ornithology section of the ROM's Department of Natural History.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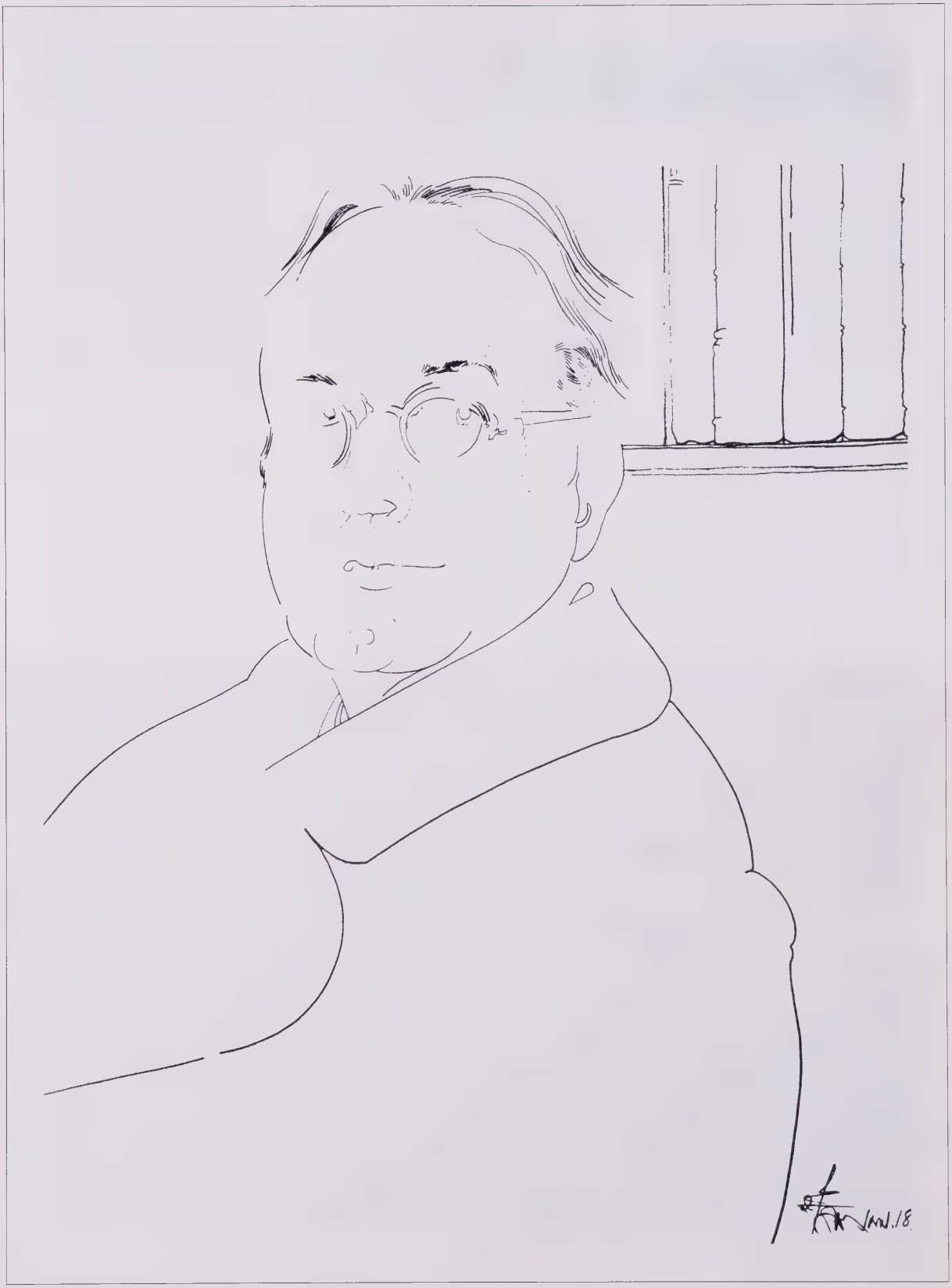


HAROLD TOWN

The Right Man *in the* Right Place *at the* Right Time

A look at the visionary who was instrumental in founding the ROM.

CREATING A MUSEUM as grand in scope as the ROM requires energetic and visionary people. One hundred years ago, Toronto had such people in abundance. The complex story of the ROM's beginnings is not well known. Scattered university collections, especially in the sciences, as well as an existing provincial museum meant that only a skillful and dedicated civic leader could steer the course through competing interests to a unified and successful enterprise.

Such a one was Sir Edmund Walker, first chairman of the Board of the five ROMs that were officially created in 1912. It could be argued that in addition to his own status, knowledge, experience, and beliefs, he needed and could count on the energy and vision of one individual who set

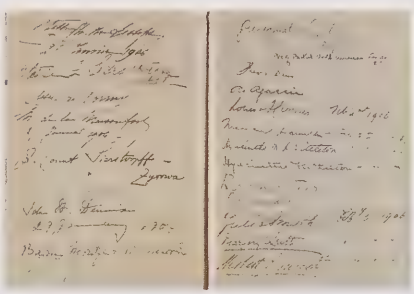
BY JULIA MATTHEWS

the process on fire: that man was Charles Trick Currelly.

Currelly's story is both typical and unique. Luckily, he wrote an autobiography, published the year before he died. From it, we learn that he was born an only child in the small Ontario town of Exeter in 1876. On his mother's side, he was connected to the Massey family; his father's roots were in Durham County, but Currelly traced them to Rome. He used to stand beside the bust of a senator in the Roman galleries and ask visitors to compare the profiles.

As a child, Currelly attended the local school and hung around the shops of the blacksmith, the tanner, and the wheelwright, learning about materials and how things were made. When he later went into the field as an archaeologist in Egypt, he remarked, "village trades were much the same trades that one met in examining ancient communities." In Exeter, he was tutored in Latin by Rev. Jasper Wilson, who also taught him to shoot, which interested him more. He pointed out that the "Exeter boys" assembled at convocation in 1926 at the University of Toronto included future venerable professors and deans, a Board member, the Canadian correspondent of the *London Times*, the premier of Saskatchewan, and the head of "a big financial company."

Currelly's high-school years brought his family to Toronto. In his Harbord Collegiate graduating class were future professors, businessmen, ministers, and the president of the CPR. His extracurricular activities were intense: he took art lessons, which would later prove to be critical in his career, and nature study with the Brody Club, which is still in existence. Two of his closest friends were also strategically important to his career. Ned Burwash was the son of Nathaniel, Chancellor of Victoria University, and Edmund Walker was the son of Byron Edmund, the first ROM chair, who was later knighted.



Previous page: Drawing of Charles Trick Currelly by Harold Town for *Rotunda* magazine, 1987. **Top:** Graduation photo of Charles Trick Currelly, 1902. His clear gaze was what attracted mentors, who called him Carlo. **Middle:** Field photo in Egypt, likely near Sedment, 1903/4. **Bottom:** A page from the Deir el Bahri visitors' book. In the top left corner is the signature of de Lesseps, the mastermind behind the Suez Canal, and at the bottom left is a baron's signature.

Currelly's first hands-on experience with antiquities took place in Bible League, led by W. E. H. Massey, who had been to Palestine and used artifacts to animate his lessons on daily life in Biblical times. That struck a spark with Currelly. It was a method he would rely on throughout his life.

Both his father and grandfather had attended Victoria University, and so did he, registering in the program called Natural Science. He took courses in biology and the earth sciences: two of his favourite professors, Parks and Coleman, would later become fellow ROM directors. He also studied "Oriental" and Romance languages, for which he said he "had no facility," adding that his visual memory was as "tenacious" as his "memory of sounds was the reverse." Following his graduation in 1898, he was primed for adventure and thought he would travel abroad. Family friend Chancellor Burwash of Victoria University intervened, insisting that Currelly had a duty to serve as a lay preacher in the burgeoning Northwest. His own son, Ned, was going. And so Currelly found himself in Umatilla, west of Dauphin—a veritable wilderness. Except for a trip to Winnipeg for synod meetings, he stayed in Umatilla for two difficult years. To make the best of things, he learned new skills, such as making sinew by chewing animal pelts and collecting aboriginal material that he later exhibited at Victoria University when he returned to study for a Master's degree. In a 1900 issue of *Acta Victoriana*, the university newspaper, "Big Chief Currelly" was reported walking on Bloor Street in full Blackfoot regalia.

When Currelly had completed his Master's degree in 1902, he and Ned Burwash at last went off to England, working their passage on a cattle ship. They planned to study how the social gospel had filtered down to the working classes, and Ned worked in settlement houses in east London. Currelly, however, was waylaid at the British

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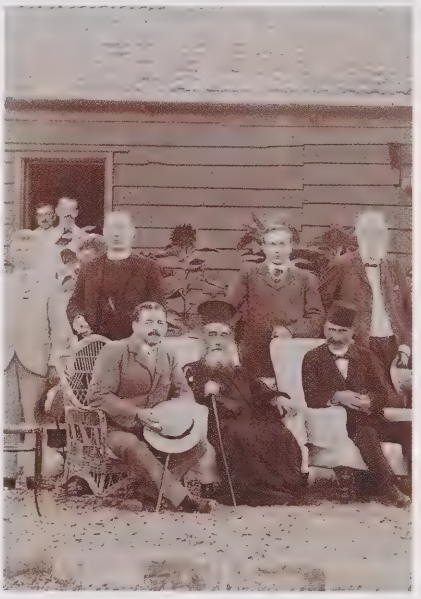
Museum, where he went to have some coins identified for a friend. When a little shawabti figure fell out of his pocket, the subject of Egypt came up. The coin curator sent him to the office of Flinders Petrie, the famous archaeologist, who interviewed him about his skill in drawing. Soon he was living in Petrie's home, and learning how to pack artifacts. In the autumn he found himself with many responsibilities at a dig in Egypt. Currelly often used this story as an illustration of the "blind luck" that accompanied his exploits. For the next eight years he worked for the Egyptian Exploration Fund. He also worked in the Sinai and in Crete, travelling in Europe and soaking up information from many people who saw his eagerness and wanted to mentor him. The idea grew that he should collect for Victoria University and be appointed to the faculty. The objects he was allowed to keep and the objects that he bought with his own money came back to Toronto with him and were exhibited at Knox College.

These were the years when Sir Edmund Walker was chairing a commission on the future of the University of Toronto. Its report in 1906 recommended a museum that would serve both students and a wider public. Currelly bought beautiful objects for Walker and others on spec to prove that things could be obtained cheaply, if only he was able to act quickly and had official funds to spend. His letters to Walker were breathless with the opportunities he was finding: "things are simply tumbling out of the mounds—sculpture, paintings on linen, enamels and tools mostly, but other stuff as well." The letters also pleaded for money, which was indeed given ($500 to start), together with an appointment as official collector for the University of Toronto.

That same year, a party of Torontonians visited his dig at Deir el Bahri. Currelly—well used to showing off to important people, as the visitor's book now in the ROM's archives proves—presented to them the wall relief he was copying and colouring for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Explaining that he had taken the opportunity to make two copies, he accepted cheques from the group, who became devoted supporters and who spread the word in Toronto. (You can see the wonderful wall painting of the voyage to Punt in the Egypt/Nubia galleries.) Sir Edmund succeeded in getting some government funding for acquisitions, and donors began to pledge multi-year amounts.

A sketch by Charles Trick Currelly. His note accompanying this sketch: "Not far from the Fork River . . . was a settlement of Galicians. They built their houses by driving stakes into the ground and then weaving a huge basket-like structure with the red willows. . . .They dug down deep enough to get clay, which was mixed with wild hay and the walls heavily plastered. . . . This type of house goes back in the Carpathian mountains to prehistoric days."



Undated photo taken in Jerusalem, possibly in 1903/4. Currelly is standing in the middle.

Currelly had learned how to bargain and had developed a keen eye for fakes and forgeries. In England, he had become well known as a buyer. His supporters also extended beyond Toronto, and when the prospect of a museum became real, many gave generously so that the provincial city could take its suitable place in the Empire. Currelly never lost touch with these wellwishers, sending barrels of Durham County apples to England every year. He was the kind of colonial boy who appealed to the rich and great. And he could dramatize the debt that he was piling up.

It was in Cairo that he first saw and purchased Chinese ceramics before they became fashionable. As the Chinese collections grew, he said that Canadians should know about these "neighbours" on the Pacific Rim. Whatever material he gathered was intended to serve as a "textbook of the development of civilization on its mechanical side." His determination to avoid merely aesthetic objects in favour of useful ones meant that he could acquire more material because the competition was not so great. It also meant that the stories eventually told by the Museum's galleries would be of interest to designers and consumers as well as schoolchildren and scholars.

By 1910, Currelly's livelihood was secure enough to allow him to marry. He had met his future wife, Mary, at a London Club. The Walkers attended their London wedding. Then the couple set off on what Mrs. Currelly

called "a shopping trip" in lieu of a honeymoon. Arriving home after a year on the road, Currelly set to work in the basement of the first Museum building, which was finally under construction.

He told a friend in a letter, "When I brought my wife to Toronto, I was away over $125,000 in debt." He kept the whole truth from emerging by informing individuals about the price tags on items that he knew would pique their interest. And when the building, which today is the ROM's Philosophers' Walk wing, was formally opened in 1914, Sir Edmund Walker reported to the Government of Ontario that the value of donations so far received was $564,850. The Board had behaved a little like Currelly by starting to build before all the financing (half government, half university) had been put in place.

Then began the next phase—continuing to collect while lobbying for more space. Currelly set up overcrowded displays to make sure that visitors would complain of the crowded conditions, and he even invited MPPs to visit and see for themselves. But it took the Depression to begin an expansion project as a means of job creation.

During the next 34 years, Currelly's was the name most associated with the ROM. He made speeches to every group that asked. He wrote radio broadcasts publicizing some of the outstanding objects. He lobbied for "Museum" signs on the Avenue Road streetcars. He supported school programming and outreach. Children came in trains from northern Ontario and teachers went out to Ontario towns with kits of artifacts. Early on, he arranged for plaster models of people to be set up in dioramas at the Canadian National Exhibition (both later used in galleries). Asked to address the American Association of Museums when it met in Toronto in 1935, he outlined what a museum director should know and how he should behave. His list would weary even today's directors. He said that every curator should have to pass through "his" galleries to get to his office, as Currelly did. And he kept attracting donors and collecting both modest and marvellous things.

Top: Among the duties of a director . . . Mrs. Macmillan is at Charles Trick Currelly's left and her husband, later Sir Ernest, is the only other man at the tea table. **Bottom:** Currelly at about the time of his retirement.

After the war, when he was 70 years old, Currelly retired. He set about restoring stone houses around his property near Canton—one of which was to be used for penurious clergy who needed relaxation. It was his wife who kept after him to write down his favourite stories about dashing adventures and adversities overcome by pluck and luck.

Even without the evidence of the autobiography, Currelly's legacy is to be seen in every one of the ROM's World Culture galleries. Not only are the Greek and Roman, Egyptian, and West Asian collections substantially composed of what he amassed, but when the first displays were in place, there were also textiles, native North American, and some African and Oceanian objects, as well as the start of the great Chinese collections. He had been reckless and relentless, charming and persuasive, and supremely confident that Toronto deserved a major museum.

Currelly died in 1957. At the memorial service held in the gallery named for him, his successor, Dr. Douglas Tushingham, delivered a eulogy that ended:

"A brief generation—the 40 years before his retirement—saw his dream come true. The Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology was known far and wide as one of the great museums of the world—an astonishing miracle in such a short span. Its collections bear the stamp of Dr. C.'s genius and human interest. Through objects, it attempts to document the life of man in all climes and ages—his daily life of toil and ingenuity, his aspirations both religious and aesthetic, his attempts in the context of family, tribe, nation, and empire to discover and live the good life." ■

TOP PHOTO COURTESY JANET WADDINGTON, ROM

At the foot of the western cliffs stands our excavator's camp. His house, just ten feet square, of sun-dried brick, roofed with rough planks and thatched with stalks of Indian corn, looks in the distance but a tiny speck upon the shimmering sand.

—Description of Currelly's hut as noted by fellow archaeologist Noel Rawnsley, 1904

The Excavator's Digs

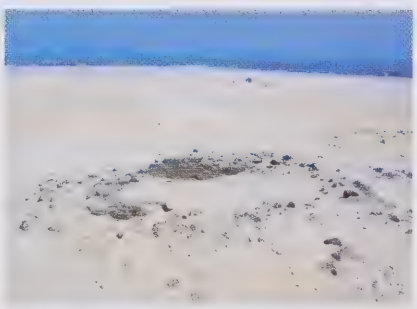
A glimpse into the past: Excavating the hut of ROM founder Charles Trick Currelly in Abydos, Egypt.

In November 1902, aspiring archaeologist and future ROM founder Charles Trick Currelly joined world-famous Egyptologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie on his archaeological expedition to Abydos, one of the most sacred cities in ancient Egypt. By December, Petrie was satisfied that Currelly had learned the skills needed to conduct a proper excavation and assigned the young Canadian to lead a dig of his own in southern Abydos.

Since the new site was some three kilometres (almost 2 miles) from Petrie's main camp, Currelly decided to build a hut closer to his workplace. A recent archaeological excavation of the hut Currelly used during his days in Abydos reveals fascinating insights into his early work and life in the desert.

At the time, one of Currelly's teammates, Noel Rawnsley, described the hut:

A tin basin, some cooking pots, and a big earthenware "bolass" of water stand outside the door; a charcoal brazier and a boiling kettle appear in the background. And inside what do we find? On one side of the room a palm-stick bed, which has not been made for many a week, and on the other two rough plank shelves. That is all the furniture, and the rest is chaos. For on the shelves "anticas" and eatables, books and tools, and on the sandy floor tins of every description are piled in rough confusion. Tins of salmon and mincemeat jostle each other among pots of the First Dynasty; a shaving brush and a revolver, a ship's biscuit and a fine "ushabti" find themselves quartered together; Huntley and Palmer and the plans of King Aahmes lie side by side with tomatoes and a hammer and nails.



Top: Currelly's hut before excavation. **Bottom:** Trowels and brushes were used for excavation.

For four months, Currelly directed a team of trained local workmen to excavate two royal rock-cut tombs. One belonged to Senwosret III (c. 1870–1831 BCE), a Middle Kingdom pharaoh who expanded Egypt's territory into Nubia and reorganized the domestic administrative structure. The second tomb belonged to Ahmose I (c. 1550–1525 BCE), a warrior king who successfully drove out Asiatic invaders called the Hyksos and founded the 18th Dynasty at the dawn of the New Kingdom period. Currelly also discovered a rare settlement site, which he dated to the time of the latter king.

In his spare time, Currelly purchased ancient objects from local antiquity dealers. This was still legal in the early 20th century. When the excavation season ended in April 1903, Currelly returned to London to help Petrie organize an exhibition of their finds. Afterwards, Petrie

By Kei Yamamoto

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY KEI YAMAMOTO

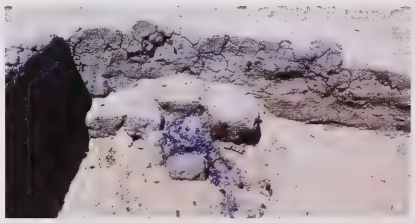
and the funding organization generously allowed Currelly to send some of the objects to Toronto for his museum, which at that time existed only in Currelly's mind. Along with the artifacts Currelly purchased in Egypt, the objects excavated at Abydos formed the beginnings of the ROM's illustrious Egyptian collection.

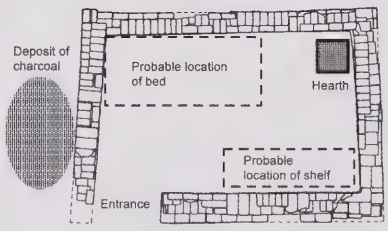
After Currelly left Egypt, his small abandoned hut was slowly covered by the shifting yellow sands of the desert.

One hundred years later, Dr. Josef Wegner of the University of Pennsylvania has been re-excavating the nearby funerary complex of Senwosret III. In February 2003, while I was studying Egyptology in Toronto, I was in the area working as an archaeologist and visited the site. Dr. Wegner kindly directed me to Currelly's hut and suggested I excavate its remains. As a student and frequent visitor to the ROM, I naturally jumped at the opportunity.

That first year I was able only to take photographs, but when I returned in April 2004 I was ready to begin a more intensive investigation of the hut. Although the structure was only 101 years old, archaeologists employed the same excavation methods used for pharaonic monuments. First, a 10 x 10 metre (33 x 33 foot) excavation unit, which marked out sections with posts and string, was laid around the hut. Then excavators began to scrape the sand carefully, using trowels and brushes. As we removed the sand layer by layer, we took elevations, noted soil matrices, measured features, and sketched them in a field notebook. One hundred percent of the soil removed from the excavation was screened with a sieve for potential small artifacts. These small finds—pottery sherds, faience beads, and more—were bagged, tagged, and registered.

Built on a gentle slope in front of a spectacular rocky cliff, Currelly's hut overlooked the yellow desert in the foreground and green cultivation fields in the distance. The hut's builders dug about 10 cm (4 inches) into the desert sand to create a level surface, then constructed the hut with sun-dried mud bricks and mud mortar. They used three different types of bricks: small brownish-grey bricks, medium-sized light grey ones, and dark grey, fairly large ones.





Top: All removed soil was carefully screened for possible artifacts. **Second:** Hearth inside the hut, looking northwest. **Third:** Currelly's key, found outside the entrance. **Bottom:** Plan of Currelly's hut.

Comparing the bricks with ancient monuments in the vicinity, it was obvious that the medium and large types had been made during the Middle Kingdom period. Currelly's workmen must have appropriated them from the ruined funerary complex of Senwosret III nearby and re-used them to supplement the small bricks that they made themselves.

At the hut's entrance there is no evidence of a door frame, yet there probably once was a door, since a large rusty key attached to a string was found just outside the hut. Inside, we found a simple hearth, also made of re-used Middle Kingdom bricks, almost certainly the "charcoal brazier" mentioned by Rawnsley.

Inside and around the hut were interesting pieces of evidence of Currelly's life and work in Abydos. Near the doorway, we found thin glass shards of a hanging lamp, which once lit Currelly's hut at night. Pieces of torn fabric, a couple of buttons, and the rubber sole of a shoe, remnants of Currelly's clothes, were still inside. It seems he made multiple attempts to fix his shoe judging by the numerous small nails that are unevenly driven into the sole. Excavators recovered matches and several fragments of a broken tub-like pot, which he must have used to cook his dinner. Some greenish glass shards had probably been part of his drinking cup.

We know what Currelly was eating by the recovered fragments of orange peel, date pits, a couple of dried figs, and a bean, as well as bones identified by faunal analyst Stine Rossel as young bovid, Nile perch, and soft-shell turtle. The canned meat and salmon mentioned in Rawnsley's description

was archaeologically confirmed by rusting tin lids and their keys with strips of metal still wrapped around them. As for drink, Currelly had Rowntree's Elect Cocoa—the instruction slip was found inside his hut. Cocoa was apparently a popular drink at the time, as Cadbury's cocoa is advertised on the back cover of *The Strand*, a British literary magazine found inside Currelly's hut. The issue, incidentally, featured works by W. W. Jacobs and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Most of the notes and memoranda found in Currelly's hut are extremely brief or torn up so badly that they are almost illegible. One note, however, written in pencil, reads, "Please send some [c]andles by bearer if there be any as I am quite out. Using candles in three places today so the two packages less one candle are all gone." Almost undoubtedly Currelly was writing to Petrie's main camp. At one point he was excavating two large subterranean tombs simultaneously and would have needed many candles.

Scattered in front of the hut we found many ancient artifacts, most likely objects that Currelly brought back from his excavation sites but decided in the end to discard. The most common are pottery pieces, many of which could be securely dated to the late Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period, early New Kingdom, and Roman Period. Large oval ceramic beads and smaller round beads of blue Egyptian faience—earthenware decorated with opaque glazes—were found, as well as a faience bowl rim painted with black floral motifs and a vessel fragment of exceptionally fine Egyptian alabaster. It is tempting to speculate that the alabaster piece came from the tomb of Senwosret III, in which Currelly discovered "exquisite alabaster dishes." Even though they had been smashed by ancient tomb robbers, these vessels were described by Currelly as "the most beautiful pieces of alabaster I have ever seen."

Items found in Currelly's hut. **Top:** Food tins and opening key. **Middle left:** Faience bowl, Middle Kingdom-New Kingdom. **Middle right:** Figs. **Bottom:** Currelly graffito found in the tomb of Senwosret III.

Another object that probably dates to the late Middle Kingdom is a fragment of an inscribed stela—a commemorative slab—on which a few hieroglyphic signs are preserved. The legible section seems to include a deity's name and his epithet "Lord of [...] Land." A tiny sheet of gold leaf found inside Currelly's hut, which measures only 10 x 3 mm (½ x ⅛th inch), may well have come from the tomb of Ahmose I, which is to our knowledge the only place in which Currelly found any gold in 1903.

For the archaeologists working in South Abydos today, Charles T. Currelly laid an important foundation to build upon. For visitors to the ROM, his work in Abydos formed a cornerstone in creating the Museum's wonderful Egyptian collection. In this sense, the excavation of Currelly's hut in Abydos provided noteworthy insights into his archaeological accomplishment and a unique perspective on the origin of the ROM's Egyptian collection—not to mention a captivating glimpse into the life of an archaeologist in the field. ■

Abydos Today

In recent years, the monuments partly excavated by Charles Trick Currelly in 1903 have been reinvestigated by the Pennsylvania-Yale-Institute of Fine Arts Expeditions. Work by Dr. Josef Wegner of the University of Pennsylvania has revealed that much of the town that Currelly found and believed to date to the reign of Ahmose I was actually established by Senwosret III in order to house the large number of personnel involved in the king's massive construction project and his perpetual mortuary cult—continual cult of the king who was deified after death—in South Abydos. Dr. Stephen P. Harvey of the University of Chicago has recently discovered a few components of the Ahmose complex that Currelly missed.

Above: H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, arriving for the opening of the ROM in 1914, is seen stepping from his motor car while Sir Edmund Walker (in the top hat) waits to escort him into the building. **Opposite page:** A detail of the Chinese collections as they were displayed in the 1914 wing, with display cases made in the ROM's own workshop.

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From Dream to Reality: A ROM Retrospective

More than 90 years ago, the ROM opened its doors. A photographic history of a stellar institution.

At noon on March 19, 1914, an elegant motor car stopped on Bloor Street in front of Toronto's newly constructed Royal Ontario Museum. The governor-general, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, had arrived to view the magnificent structure gracing Philosophers' Walk. Waiting to greet him, wearing the formal attire of the day, was Sir Edmund Walker, the first chair of the ROM Board. Sir Edmund together with Sir Edmund Osler, financier of Osler & Hammond Stock Brokers, president of the Dominion Bank, and Member of Paliament (1896–1917), had brought Charles Trick Currelly's dream to fruition: a museum to house the collections Currelly had amassed since his appointment as official collector for the University of Toronto in 1906.

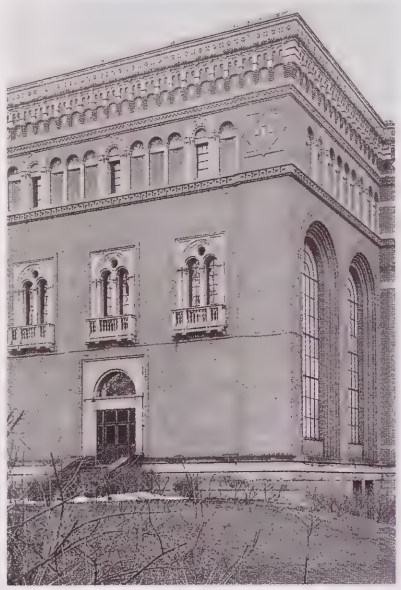
Designed by the architectural firm of Darling and Pearson, the buff-coloured brick and terra-cotta façade stood in marked contrast to the Gothic and Romanesque structures of neighbouring McMaster and Victoria universities.

The 1914 building, which cost $390,567 to erect, represented the west wing of a proposed H-shaped structure, a design attributed to Sir

By Arthur Smith

Aston Webb, architect for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. By the 1920s the Museum's collections had outgrown the west wing, and in 1929 the ROM Board adopted a plan to complete the H-shape proposed earlier.

By 1931, when the work commenced, Ontario was deep in the grip of the Great Depression. The ROM's expansion, designed by Toronto architects Chapman and Oxley, became a provincial make-work project with the stipulation that Ontario labour and materials be used



COURTESY DARLING & PEARSON, ARCHITECTS, TORONTO

Top: Construction of the 1930s addition to the ROM with Victoria University in the background. Photograph was taken on April 15, 1931. **Bottom left and right:** West wing of the Royal Ontario Museum, begun in 1909 and finished in 1912. The view in the picture at left looks south from Bloor Street showing the front entrance, 1909–1912. **Opposite page, top:** Original oak doors being installed by Mr. Fred W. Hepple at the Queen's Park entrance in 1931. **Opposite page, middle left:** The Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Gallery of the Royal Ontario

wherever possible. The exterior was constructed of Credit Valley and Queenston limestone, and the interior marble floors and trim fashioned from Bancroft marble. The Don Valley brickworks supplied matching bricks for the walls that would face the 1914 wing.

The new east wing opened October 12, 1933, at a cost of $1.8 million. With this addition, the entrance to Queen's Park Crescent was re-oriented through a magnificent domed rotunda topped by Italian glass tiles. The part of the H-shape that linked the old and new

Museum at 14 Queen's Park Crescent West, was a new wing of the Canadiana Building given to the Museum by Dr. Sigmund Samuel and opened by the Lieutenant Governor on Saturday, March 22, 1958. The Canadiana Gallery housed Dr. Samuel's famous collection of historical paintings, drawings, prints, books, maps, documents, and ship models. **Bottom left:** Security guards at the opening of the ROM in 1914. **Bottom right:** The Queen's Park wing of the ROM in 1933.

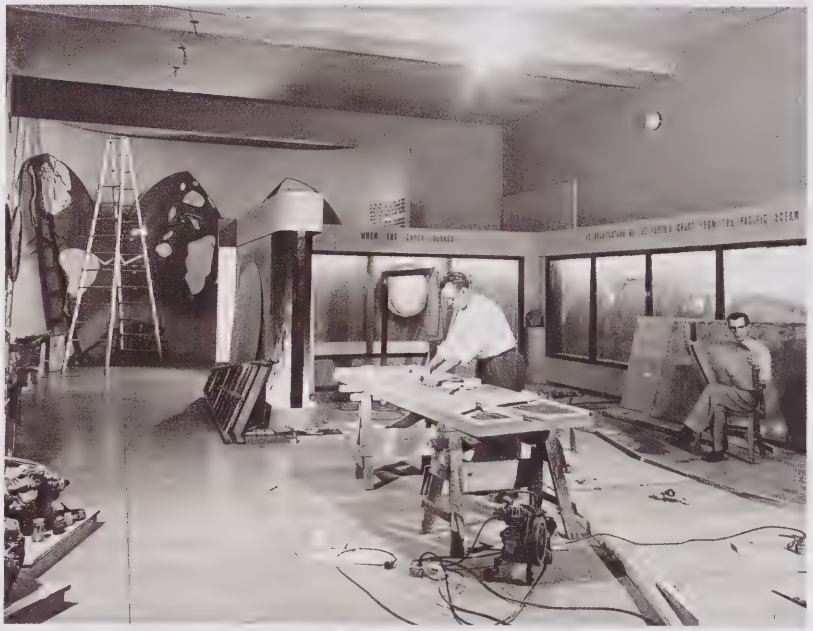
wings housed the Armour Court, known today as Samuel Hall ⚜ Currelly Gallery, with wall murals painted by Sylvia Hahn added in 1940/41.

Over the years, the spaces between the 1914 and 1933 buildings housed a number of temporary structures, including an exhibition hall, a members' lounge, and a Chinese garden that extended outdoors. In 1951, the Canadiana collections were re-located to the new Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Building, erected to house the Ontario Archives as well as the ROM's Canadiana Gallery.

Top: Exhibition of Chinese textiles, on display in 1956. **Bottom left:** The Ming Tomb as it appeared in 1959. The Chinese lions now grace the Queen's Park entrance to the ROM. **Bottom right:** Undated photo by Leigh Warren showing the Rotunda with its Italian glass mosaic dome. **Opposite page, top:** General view of the East Gallery, highlighting mostly Canadian animals, c. 1923.

The next set of major changes for the ROM came in 1968, when the Museum formally separated from the University of Toronto, becoming an agency of the Government of Ontario. Later that same year the McLaughlin Planetarium opened to the public, a satellite to the ROM, financed by a $2.25 million donation from Colonel R. Samuel McLaughlin.

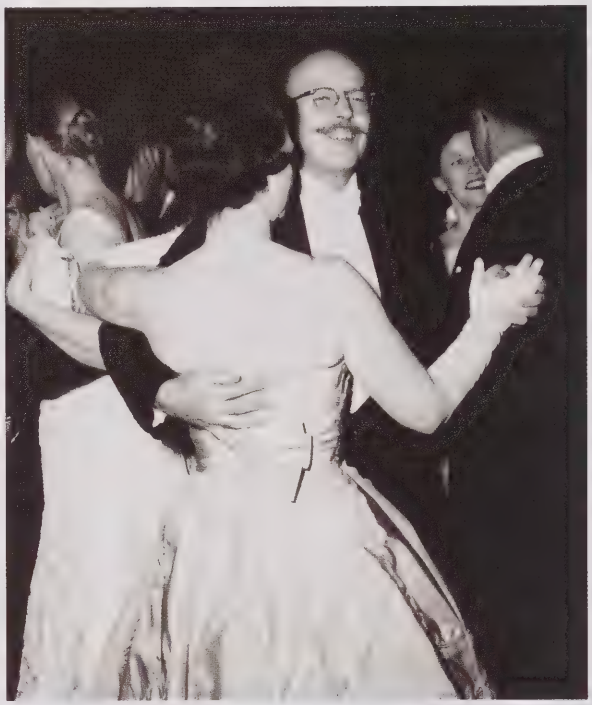
By the mid-1970s with the ROM once again pressed for space, the Board approved plans for another major expansion, filling in the spaces between the arms of the

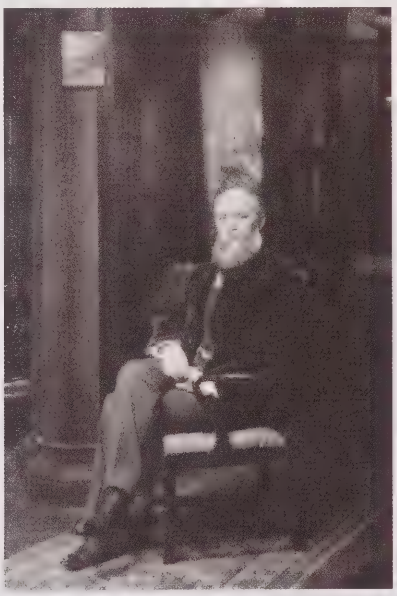


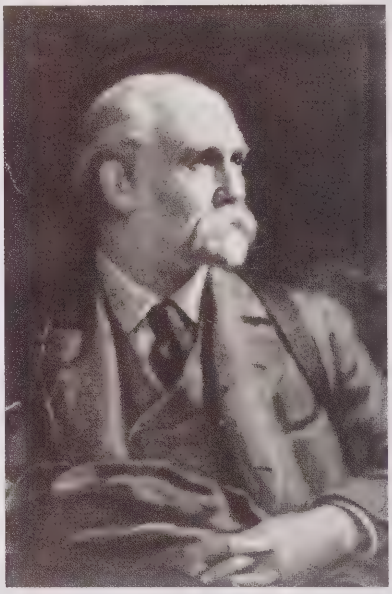
Bottom left: Saturday Morning Club members drawing in the Armour Court in 1949. **Bottom right:** Geology galleries under reconstruction in 1962. John Hillen, head of the Exhibit Design Department, is seen working at the bench. Dr. Walter M. Tovell, curator of geology and later director of the ROM, is seen studying the Geologic Atlas.

original H-shape with nine floors of curatorial offices, labs, a library, and storage on the south side, and the Terrace Galleries and a restaurant on the north side. When the newly renovated ROM re-opened to the public on September 24, 1982, only 10 percent of its projected galleries were ready for viewing. To complete the remainder of the galleries, the ROM implemented a gallery-development plan that would take the ROM through the 1980s and 1990s.

With the recent renewal of the Heritage Galleries,



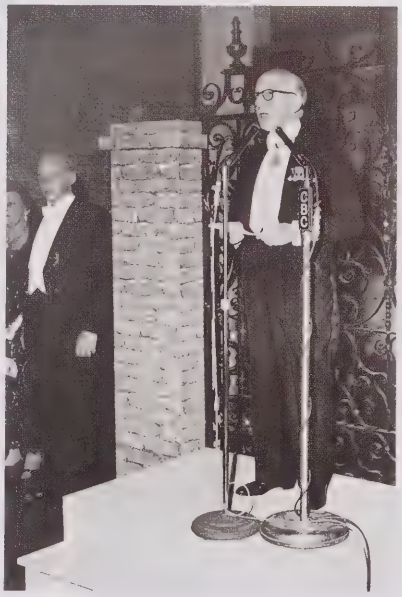




Top left: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, being presented with a copy of *Art Treasures in the Royal Ontario Museum* by Lionel Massey, former associate director, during her visit to the ROM on June 26, 1965. **Top right:** The couple dancing are Dr. T. A. Heinrich (ROM director 1955–1962) and his secretary, Mrs. Margaret Walker. The event is the opening gala for the Silver Exhibition of 1958. **Bottom left:** Portrait of Sir Edmund Walker, first chairman of the ROM Board (1912–1924). **Bottom middle:** Portrait of Mrs. Sarah (Harold D.) Warren, a member of the ROM's Board of Trustees from 1912 to 1952 and a former vice-chairman. A generous benefactress, she covered the cost of numerous acquisitions purchased by C. T. Currelly for the Museum. **Bottom right:** Portrait of Dr. Arthur P. Coleman, the first director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Geology (1913–1922). **Opposite page, top:** ROM staff acted as models for the

many of the features of the early architecture and design of the ROM have been restored, to be appreciated by yet another generation of Museum visitors. Juxtaposed with the old will be the post-modern Michael Lee-Chin Crystal designed by Daniel Libeskind, to open later this year. The Crystal will once again make Bloor Street the point of entry for the ROM, with a dramatic atrium welcoming visitors of the 21st century.

The images featured on these pages are highlights of the Royal Ontario Museum through the years. ■



mural in the Armour Court (now Samuel Hall ✿ Currelly Gallery) painted by Sylvia Hahn in 1940/41. L.to R.: Mr. Fortune, Mr. Petrie (standing), Bishop White, unknown gentleman with bowed head (standing), Mr. Menzies, Mrs. Brett (Maw), Miss Ella Martin, Miss Ruth Home, Dr. Homer Thompson, Mr. Classey (standing), Mr. T. F. McIlwraith, Dr. Currelly, Miss Mary Campbell. **Bottom left:** His Excellency the Governor General the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey opens the English Silver Exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, January 13, 1958. Mr. H. M. Turner, chairman of the Museum Board, and Mrs. Turner are seen to the left. **Bottom right:** The first vehicle acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1926, a Model T Ford. Dr. T. L. Walker, first director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Mineralogy (1913–1937), is sitting in the back, with Prof. A. L. Parsons driving. Parsons later served as director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Mineralogy from 1939 to 1944.

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

Man *on a* Mission

One of the founders of the ROM's world-renowned Chinese collection, Bishop White spent a remarkable 38 years in China, honing his understanding of the country and its archaeology.

In 1945, after World War II had ended, Bishop William White received a call from China to help reconstruct the mission he had been instrumental in building two decades before. When he rushed from his office at the ROM, where he now worked as a curator, on the day of his departure, he couldn't find a cab. This wasn't a problem for White. He simply strode out onto Avenue Road and hailed a passing motorist, exclaiming in a loud voice "I am Bishop White. I am on my way to China and I haven't much time to catch my train. Please drive me quickly to Union Station." As White's biographer Lewis Walmsley notes, the startled driver agreed.

Though his strong personality sometimes caused clashes with colleagues, Bishop White knew how to get things done. In Toronto, he is perhaps best known for helping to amass one of the finest collections of Chinese antiquities anywhere outside China, including a magnificent Buddhist mural that graces the gallery named for White at the Royal Ontario Museum. Not as well known is White's extraordinary 38-year career as a missionary in China, where, in addition to preaching the gospel, he tangibly improved conditions for thousands of people. Over the course of his missionary work, White became immersed in the country's culture, history, and language, and came to understand the Chinese spirit. In the end, some say, he is the one who was converted to their ways.

The oldest of 10 children, William Charles White was born at Ivy Bridge, England, in 1873. As a boy he moved to Canada with his family, where his stonemason father had built a strong house in Norwood, a small village east of Peterborough. According to Alwyn Austin's 1986 book *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom 1888–1959*, White was remembered in his hometown as an ambitious young man with a winning smile, though it is rare to see it in later photos.

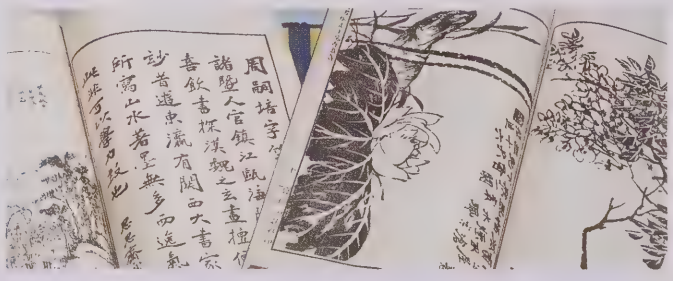
The Whites were not particularly religious, but young William came of age burning with evangelical zeal. His diary, which he began in 1893 at age 20, was peppered with references to having "a good square talk" with those whose souls concerned him. In 1895, he writes "Oh! Make me more earnest this year for Thee, more on fire, more zealous for souls. Let me be wholehearted pure and very outspoken in my witness for Thee . . . I want a deeper knowledge of Thy word. Above all I want to be more like Christ in everything." It seems he succeeded, at least in the "more on fire" part. At Wycliffe College, now part of the University of Toronto, where he attended theology classes, White's ambition for soul-saving was so intense that he was repri-

By Lee-Anne Jack

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / MU 84: FEL 761 TAN

THE H. H. MU LIBRARY

The H. H. Mu Library contains more than 40,000 Chinese volumes of classic books of art, science, and literature, some dating to the Ming dynasty. These were collected by Chinese scholar Mu Xuexun, who served as Chinese secretary to the German legation in Peking until his death in 1929. Mr. Mu's family was eager to keep the collection intact and in an institution of higher learning as a memorial to their father. Without asking consent from the ROM, Bishop White jumped at the opportunity to obtain the books at a bargain price, even contributing $10,000 of his own money for the purchase. The collection took a specialist in Chinese rare editions four years to catalogue.



manded by the older students, who saw his fervour as too "Methodist" for the Anglican school.

It may have been a young Norwood businessman, Edward Pitt Cuffe, who steered White towards the ministry. Cuffe, who served as a lay reader at the Norwood church, had hired White as after-school help. However it began, White was in earnest about religion throughout his life. In the early days, prayer, meditation, and self-analysis were part of his daily practice, and his diary entries show that he was grateful for God's hand in his life. White attributed his successes to God's favour and his failures to God's desire to teach him specific lessons.

White was convinced that if he kept God's will nothing could prevail against him. After his death, fellow Mason Brother John W. Auckland reminisced at a meeting of the Masonic brothers that White's "private confrontations with God were more real to him than his associations with colleagues and friends. His faith provided his energy and confidence in his abilities."

And White was confident to a fault. He seldom missed an opportunity to disagree with classmates. Even in his Bible, in places where he felt the translation from the original Greek was not correct, he noted down his own version. On a visit to the Normal School museum while in his early 20s, the marble busts of great men sparked his enthusiasm more than the exhibits on display—an early hint at the ambition that would eventually eclipse his desire for humility. As a young man, White struggled with these troublesome traits. Walmsley in his 1974 biography *Bishop in Honan* (an older spelling of the province name Henan) notes that White "recognized his conceited selfish spirit and that his ambitions were heavens high."

Even so, the naturally effervescent young White spent his abundant energies and enthusiasms liberally—he snowshoed, canoed, played guitar, wrote poetry, painted, swam, played football, basketball, and lacrosse, and even took an interest in the occult sciences for a time, attempting to hypnotize friends, though apparently without success. These friends must have been a tolerant bunch. White later practiced his crude dentistry skills on them. He had acquired some knowledge by hanging around hospitals and the University of Toronto's Department of Medicine. Pulling teeth and dispensing medicine were skills he would put to good use as a missionary in China.

Top: Bishop and Mrs. White in Chinese garb. **Bottom:** White wearing some of his many decorations.

It was while White was working as assistant secretary at the Ottawa YMCA and asked to lecture about an African missionary that he developed a desire to go to Africa himself. His application for missionary work was accepted by the Missionary Society in Canada, but no post was immediately available, so White went to Wycliffe College to study theology. In 1896 he was ordained as an Anglican minister in St. Alban's Cathedral. When a posting did come available, it wasn't to Africa as White had dreamed, but to China. In 1897, at age 23, he sailed for China, knowing little about the country.

Among the Dragon-mist mountains, where tea plantations still produce fragrant Oolong tea, White settled in Jianning, in Fujian province. To deflect attention from himself in a place where few Westerners were seen, White adopted the local clothing and grew his hair long enough to wear in a queue. He quickly realized that to be effective in making converts to Christianity he would need to learn the local dialect of Mandarin. Before long, he became known as "the foreigner who speaks Chinese like a Chinese."

In his portrait of White in *Six Journeys: A Canadian Pattern* (1977), Charles Taylor points out that when White arrived in Fujian he was filled with conventional notions of his day about the "essential superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and the spiritual depravity of the lesser breeds." These feelings, Taylor claims, "were reinforced by [White's] own intense faith and his conviction that he had been especially chosen to bring salvation to the heathen."

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 933.6.1

BUDDHIST WALL PAINTING

The Buddhist wall painting called *The Paradise of Maitreya,* which today graces the Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art, is one of the finest to come out of China and is probably the bishop's greatest collecting coup. Considered one of the world's major art treasures, the mural is from a temple, the Xinghua si (Monastery for the Promotion of the Buddhist Faith) in Xiaoning, a village in southwestern Shanxi province. The monastery was destroyed during the 1940s.

The mural was collected by Bishop White in late 1928, a very politically unstable time in China. It arrived at the ROM in 1929 in 63 individual sections. It had been cut up for shipment to Canada. The ROM hired expert George Stout to devise a way to rejoin the pieces and mount the mural for display in 1933.

Painted by Zhu Haogu and his pupil Zhang Boyuan (probably in 1298), it depicts the future Buddha, Maitreya, giving a sermon in the company of his retinue—monks, bodhisattvas, and heavenly beings. The event shown was predicted by the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni: that Maitreya, who was then ruling in the Tushita heaven (the fourth of six heavens in the world of desire) as a bodhisattva, would be reborn as a human and attain Buddhahood. He would give three sermons to save people from suffering, and many would follow him. The two dignitaries depicted at his sides are undergoing tonsure, a Buddhist ritual signifying a willingness to join the monastic order. They are singled out for depiction because they set an example for tens of thousands of people.

White was particularly distressed by what he saw as idolatry in the local custom of ancestor worship. When White eventually made his first convert, Taylor notes, "he took special pleasure in the destruction of the convert's household idols." After winning his next convert, however, White took the idolatrous scroll and gilt image back to the mission. His interest in Chinese art was kindled.

When White was posted to China, he had to leave behind his girlfriend, Annie Ray, whom he'd met in college. But 10 months later the church permitted her to join him; they were married in Shanghai two days after her arrival.

During their early years in China, the Whites had three children—Robert Stewart, Gordon Brainerd, and Mary. Their family life together was not long lived, though. When the children were about 5 or so they were each sent to England for schooling.

In the areas of Fukien province White was transferred to, he threw himself into his missionary work with zeal. Though the Anglican mission had been in Fukien for six years before White arrived, it had failed to win any converts, except a lone catechist. This was hardly surprising. White arrived shortly after the Boxer Rebellion, an uprising in which 200 missionaries and their families as well as some 20,000 converts to Christianity were killed. During White's 38 years in China, political conditions were in turmoil much of the time.

Top: The bishop's residence in Kaifeng, China, completed in 1911. **Bottom:** Young White in 1893, when he was assistant secretary of the Ottawa YMCA.

Nevertheless, White managed to draw crowds to the church by singing hymns in English or playing a gramophone. He put his medical and dental skills to work, helped cure opium addicts, and worked with a leper colony.

At the time, there were some 380,000 lepers in China. The afflicted were seen not as merely diseased, but as a moral disgrace. The disease was also considered hereditary, so families of the afflicted were forced to live in the colonies, even if they were healthy. White organized a home for the healthy away from the colony, within the missionary compound. In 1902, he baptized three women, five men, and two children.

In 1907, White moved to Fuzhou. His experience in this beautiful city dotted with banyan trees deeply affected him. His work there was not with poor farmers as in Fukien, but with the well-educated mandarin class who staunchly refuted Christianity. He was dazzled by their elegant manners and luxurious works of art. "It is quite possible," notes Taylor, that for the first time "White began to feel a bit uncouth." Certainly, during his time in Fuzhou, White began to drop his dogmatic approach. He was so taken with Confucianism that he began to consider that Christianity could coexist with the Chinese doctrines.

At age 36, White became one of the youngest bishops in the Church of England. He had been asked to scout a location for a new Chinese mission and had suggested Kaifeng, the capital of Henan province—one of the last areas of China to open to Western influence. When White recommended that a bishop be put in charge, he himself was asked to fill the position.

Located in China's central plain, Henan's 176,120 square kilometres (68,000 square miles) in White's day contained some 35 million people. Traditionally it was regarded as the starting place of Chinese civilization. Not long after the Whites arrived in early 1910, a series of famines swept the area, the worst occurring in 1920/21. White efficiently coordinated local relief, serving for a number of years as head of the Red Cross and national relief organizations. Drawing on his formidable organizational skills, he arranged for trainloads of food and supplies to be shipped to Henan and supervised their distribution. On one occasion that first year, White was able to acquire half a shipload of Manchurian bean seeds, which resulted in a particularly outstanding crop. In an interview with the *Port Colborne Evening Fortune* in 1949 White would recount that since 1910 in Henan, Manchurian green beans were never called anything but Anglican green beans.

White's biographer Walmsley points out that "over the years, the foodstuffs and financial assistance which [White] obtained from abroad for famine relief saved tens of thousands of lives." For his efforts, White was awarded many Chinese decorations: the Order of the

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 933.12.55

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BRONZES

Bishop White collected numerous ritual vessels from China's Henan province in the 1920s. Most of these vessels, dated from the 14th to the 11th century BCE, were used exclusively by Shang noblemen in central China and represent the most exquisite artworks of the Chinese Bronze Age. The ROM's collection is one of the most comprehensive and important outside China. Shown above are a *gu* wine vessal (left), a *gong* wine vessel (top right), and a pair of finials (bottom right).

Excellent Crop, the Precious Light Star, the Order of the Striped Tiger, the Medal of the Unicorn, the Order of the Double Rhinoceros, and the Order of Mercy.

At the same time, White was overseeing construction of several buildings on the Anglican mission. Within two years of his arrival, a bishop's residence, a girl's school with an onsite teacher's residence, the Door of Hope orphanage, and the St. Andrew's college for boys were all erected. A 1000-seat cathedral would open much later, in 1922.

White firmly believed that the Chinese should control their own church system and as quickly as possible. When he left China in 1934, 11 churches with their own Chinese pastors had been established. And he insisted that his Chinese assistant, Reverend Philip Lindel Tsen, be made bishop. White's backing of an independent church for China as well as his negotiating skills served the war-torn community well.

In 1911 the ruling Manchus were overthrown, launching a prolonged period of civil war. On at least two occasions White was called on to negotiate peace between warlords. In 1920, 1922, 1924, and 1927, Henan was torn by four large-scale civil wars. In 1927, the town of Kweiteh (or Kuei-te; now called Shangqiu), where the mission-run hospital was located, changed hands six times. "Bandits, famine, personal danger, masses of humanity, these were the ordinary perils of life in China," wrote *Saving China* author Austin.

In a letter to Canada in 1929, White reported that "armies have been moving to and fro and it has been a constant task to keep our buildings from being occupied by these different military units." Austin attributes the Anglican mission's remaining relatively unscathed to White's reputation. Among the Henan missionaries, a remark was often bandied about: "Don't worry about the Bishop. He is God's white-haired boy."

Top: Bishop White in Masonic garb. **Bottom:** A White family portrait, 1947. Standing is White's son Gordon. On the Bishop's left is Peter White with daughter Cathay.

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

Things didn't always go smoothly at the mission. While White was gaining popularity with the locals, his own colleagues were not so impressed. According to Austin, White sometimes misused workers talents—assigning nurses to work as matrons of girls' schools and teachers to hospital administration. And he never delegated an inch of his authority, which "made him appear a dictator to some." White was known to have favourites, such as missionary Ruth Jenkins, who called him "Bip."

But to others, White was a demanding taskmaster. As a bishop, he expected complete obedience. Conditions at the mission that first year were sometimes difficult. White had had a falling out with a mission doctor and they were not speaking. At one point White was recalled to Canada to face a special meeting of the Missionary Society. Each missionary was asked for an opinion of White and none was too complimentary. He gossiped behind their backs that they were "dreadful," according to Austin, and "tried to keep their work "under the closest supervision."

The committee ruled that White was guilty only of tactlessness. The bishop returned to China determined to improve the mission's atmosphere. Soon, the Anglican mission became widely respected "not only within the province and the Anglican country but also throughout China as a forward-looking operation." It seems likely, though, that some of White's young charges continued to chafe under his absolute rule. A few transferred elsewhere.

In Fukien, the locals had given White a Chinese name: Huai Li-kuan. Huai Li—"one who diffuses enlightenment," and kuan—"one who searches for the wonderful, the rare, the mysterious." By the early 1920s, with the building of the mission largely completed, White was seized by a new passion—one that allowed him to live up to his second name.

In Kaifeng he discovered remnants of a Jewish synagogue that once stood there— two stone steles, one dated to 1489, and a carved laver. The Jews had long since been integrated into Chinese society, but White

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 930.21.136-137

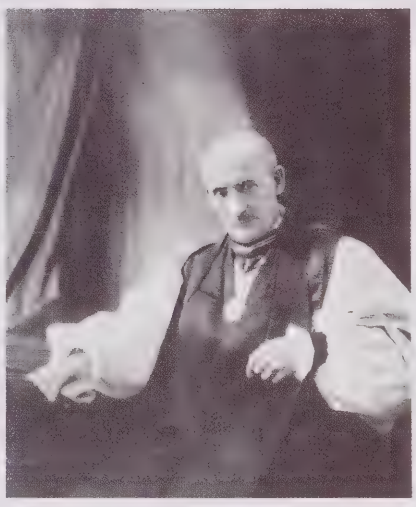
BELLS

Two fine Biao bells in the ROM's collection were recovered by Bishop White in the early 1930s from a small village, Jinchun, an outskirt of today's Luoyang City in Henan province. The bronze bells were originally part of a 14-piece set cast by a nobleman named Biao, who lived during the time of Confucius (5th to 3rd century BCE). The bells serve as an important document of state affairs in that their cast inscriptions refer to a military campaign that Biao wished to commemorate. The other bells in the set are housed at Sen-oku Hakukokan Museum in Japan.

found their story rivetting. His book on the subject, three large tomes published in 1942, was the first to bring knowledge of this Chinese Jewish community to the broader world. He had the two steles moved from the synagogue to the Trinity Cathedral site in Kaifeng.

Two other Canadians who were also interested in Chinese archaeology, Dr. John Ferguson, the first president of the University of Nanking, and Rev. James Menzies, a Prebyterian missionary at Anyang who studied oracle bones, began to correspond with him, sharing their knowledge. Ferguson introduced White to noted archaeologists in the region.

These were exciting times for such work. As railroads were being built in Henan, digging revealed remarkable finds, including royal tombs at nearby Anyang and Louyang. White started dabbling in curio collecting in Kaifeng, which had become the main trading centre in North China for antiquities. In 1924, while on leave in Toronto, he paid a visit to Charles Trick Currelly, first director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, with, according to ROM historian Lovat Dickson in his book *The Museum Makers* (1986), a fine Chinese painting under his arm. They agreed that White would officially collect for the Museum.



Top: Bishop White with missionaries in Kaifeng, China, 1912. **Bottom:** White in his bishop's robes and ring also wears the Chinese decoration Order of the Excellent Crop.

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

Spurred by a singlemindedness familiar to any collector, he threw himself into the task. And time was on his side. Like Currelly before him, White was in the right place at the right time. Relying heavily on a Buddhist curio dealer in Kaifeng who went out of his way to find whatever the bishop wanted, White began sending home huge shipments of Chinese objects. "I have practically cleaned out the collectors in the city shops," he wrote to Currelly on one occasion, and on another, "the enclosed will take your breath away." White became so driven by ambitions of fame as a collector of an outstanding Chinese collection that some complained that he was ignoring his mission work.

At one point finances had become a problem for the ROM. Currelly wrote to White: "The things you sent over certainly are of marvellous quality and one feels terribly loath to say 'Stop!' But the Board has said 'Stop!'" White ignored this warning and rung up $90,000 on the ROM's overdraft. "White was as clever and ruthless as any gifted dealer," writes Lovat Dickson. "He knew about people who had fallen on hard times and might be prepared to part with their treasures for a small price," he added, possibly referring to the H. H. Mu Collection of Chinese classics (see page 32). White assured the Board that he was in no hurry for payment. Dickson wonders how White managed to carry the enormous sums on a bishop's salary. It is not known.

By the end, White had collected objects of daily life that revealed Chinese culture over 4000 years. Items such as the Buddhist mural are among the world's finest art treasures (see page 34). The early Chinese bronzes he sent to the ROM form the largest such collection outside China, with some pieces dating to the Shang dynasty, 16th–11th century BCE (see page 36). Impressively diverse, the collection includes thousands of items, such as bowls, jades, tomb tiles, lamps, scrolls, animal figures, daggers, ceremonial or *pi* discs, as well as a wooden Torah case, two pages from a Rosh Hashannah machzor, and several other items from the Chinese Jewish community, which have recently gone on display in the ROM's Matthews Family Court of Chinese Sculpture.

By the late 1920s, though, competition was pricing White out of the market, and by 1930 the Chinese government had banned all export of Chinese antiquities. Three years later, White was forced out of China by the darkening political situation.

At age 60, White was eager to embark on a new career as museum curator and university professor. Over the years, he had kept in touch with his own professor from Wycliffe College, Dr. H. J. Cody, who had become president of the University of Toronto the previous year, and with Cody's and Currelly's backing White was able to establish a school of Chinese Studies at the university. He was keenly aware of China's vast potential, which, though widely apparent to us today, remained unrealized during White's lifetime.

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 933.12.2

SUNDIAL

A STONE SUNDIAL showing minutes as well as hours is one of only two known complete sundials dated to the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE). The other is housed in the National Museum of China. Bishop White collected the ROM's example from Jincun near Luoyang in Henan province.

White proved to be an inspired teacher. "His enthusiasm carries a contagion," one of his students told Walmsley. Another student, Louise Hawley Stone, who would later become the ROM's single greatest benefactor, belonged to a group who greatly admired the "Bish." After White's death, Stone organized the Bishop White Committee and the Bishop White Fund in his memory. Today, White's name is inextricably linked with the ROM—aside from the committee and the fund, there are two curatorial positions, an annual luncheon, and the Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art, named in his honour.

Bishop and Mrs. White, with a Tang horse from the ROM's marvellous Chinese collection, at their home in Fonthill, Ontario, 1948.

COURTESY TORONTO SUN SYNDICATE

Ever the populizer, White published five books about his collections and gave lectures, including a Friday-afternoon public series on China. "Within a few years," notes Charles Taylor, "the ROM's collection and its curator had a world wide reputation."

White had absorbed Chinese culture thoroughly. His later life was filled with ideas of the East. According to Walmsley, an Anglican colleague of White's remarked that he now talked incessantly about Chinese bronzes and bones, but never mentioned theology. Some felt that, with his slight frame, White even looked Chinese. His assistant, Betty Kingston, was one of those who thought that White's attitude was "more Chinese than the Chinese." He enjoyed the pomp and ritual of his position and he wore his decorations proudly. But she felt he was not one to stand on ceremony.

Even so, White had been strongly influenced by China's ideas of hierarchy. In China, a man in his position would never be challenged, and he liked it that way. This sometimes created difficulties at the ROM. One of his assistants, George Spendlove, who had a more in-depth academic background than White, would challenge his opinions. This did not sit well with White, and eventually, Lovat Dickson records, "there was an all-out fight heard up and down the corridor 'so that we all' as one listener recalled, 'ducked for cover.'"

In his personal life, White was equally dogged. When his wife, Annie, died soon after the Whites returned from China, eligible women pressed their attentions on White, some aggressively. According to Walmsley, White once confessed to Dr. Cody that he would either have to re-marry or leave town. But his choice of a second wife—a missionary named Daisy Masters—was made in typical White fashion. He came to the decision in his own mind, then wrote to Daisy out of the blue with a proposal. She turned him down. He wrote again. This went on as he argued for his position and she refuted his arguments. Finally, White argued that the union was ordained by God, and Daisy, unable, it seems to counter such an argument from a bishop, agreed to marry him.

There were two sides to White, yin and yang. Lovat Dickson points out White's fierce intensity while Lewis Walmsley notes his calmness and quietness of spirit. His friends in the Chinese government awarded White with a plaque that read "Good with men together," and while he did enjoy a relaxed intimacy with his brother freemasons and the clergy's upper echelon, Walmsley notes that his relationship with the public held an impersonal quality. He had faith in abundance in himself and in his God, but not so much in his colleagues. White was both hard and soft, insider and outsider, testy and statesmanlike.

White's friend and fellow Mason Brother Charles A. Sankey may have put his finger on what made White so persuasive when he recalled, "He intuitively knew your feelings, was aware of your outlook and objectives, recognized and was sympathetic to your problems, laughed with you, cried with you, and supported you. . . This was what enabled him to export such fabulous things—his Chinese friends knew he loved their work and respected it."

But at the ROM, his bossy reputation lingered. When Charles Currelly retired in 1946, the new director, Gerard Brett, refused to take up his post until he was assured that the bishop would be retired.

By then, the cathedral that White had built in China had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution—although the two Jewish stele survived—and the schools he had established had been scrapped under orders by the Kuomintang government. Many of White's efforts to improve social conditions and spread Christianity in China had already been forgotten or forcibly destroyed under Communist rule, although White continued to believe that China would become a Christian nation. But even in retirement his name was well known to the Chinese.

The fine Chinese collection and gallery that carry Bishop White's name will forever serve as testimony to his appreciation of Chinese culture. And the descendants of the thousands of people whose lives he saved carry that culture forward.

When White died in 1960 at age 86, he was speaking Minnang-hua, the Jianning dialect, which nobody around him understood. To the end, the Chinese spirit followed him. ■

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

The Powerful Guan Yu

Conserving one of the few ROM East Asian sculptures that retains its original matte finish.

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM / 921.1.76

Guan Yu, God of War, after conservation treatment is now on display in the Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art.

DOUGLAS CONVERSE

When the new East Asian galleries opened in late 2005, ROM-goers got a special treat. Returning to display after being out of view for more than 50 years is one of the most unique sculptures in the ROM's collection—a 16th-century Ming dynasty sculpture of Guan Yu. A figure of historical note in China, Guan Yu (c. 160–219 CE) was one of the great heroes of the Three Kingdoms Period (220–265 CE).

Deified after his death, Guan Yu held a place of great honour in history as one of the most revered deities in Chinese popular religion. He is prayed to for protection and prosperity, as well as to solve all manner of personal and domestic problems.

Almost a century ago, George Crofts, a dealer in China who was acquiring objects for the ROM and other museums, purchased the sculpture. When it arrived in Toronto about 1921 it was in very poor condition. But it went on exhibit, quickly becoming a showpiece of the day. No one is quite sure when the sculpture was taken off display, but likely in the late 1940s. Quietly the God of War sat until the latest ROM renovation gave it a new chance for display.

After all its years in storage, the sculpture needed more than a light dusting to get it ready for display. Hours of conservation work were required, including cleaning, consolidation, and repair. Decorative arts conservator Marianne Webb says that the approach to Guan Yu's treatment was critical because this sculpture is one of the few in the ROM that still retains its original matte finish.

Webb examined the sculpture's overall condition. The first step in treating any object is establishing the materials and construction methods used to create it. This guides how the work will be done.

The type of wood used was unknown, but Webb thought it could be willow, which is commonly used in China for sculpture. The construction was a multi-block method—about 12 individual blocks connected with butterfly joins.

The wood was coated with several ground layers—a layer of clay, then cloth, and finally another layer of fine clay. This provided a smooth surface on which to apply the paint and reduced any movement of the paint layers as the wood shrank or expanded in varying humidity.

On top of the ground layers were three coats of red paint. Originally, Webb thought the paint was urushi (lacquer), but analysis of a sample at the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) showed that the medium in the paint was tung oil. In the first two layers, the pigment is iron oxide, while in the top layer it is cinnabar, a brighter red colouring that is very expensive and was thus used for only one layer. The sculpture's entire surface was gilded and then coated with a layer of tung oil. This technique gives the surface a rich, warm, luxurious look. The ROM has one other sculpture with the same red paint topped with gilding and tung oil, a fat-bellied Buddha, also on display in the new galleries.

MARIANNE WEBB, ROM

MARIANNE WEBB, ROM

Top: Guan Yu is seen here covered with dirt before conservation with both feet detached. **Bottom:** Paint that was lifting was consolidated with natural adhesives and held in place during drying with numerous clamps and weights.

After examining the object, Webb determined that the object was repainted—with the bright colourful pattern seen today—during the Ming dynasty, soon after the sculpture was constructed. The original gilded surface, seen through small losses in the later-painted surface, was not worn prior to the re-painting.

When the Guan Yu came into the lab there were problems with both the surface decoration and the structure. The joins between the wooden blocks were separating and both feet were detached. The entire decorative surface was cleaving, or lifting off, the clay ground layer. In some spots, the ground layer itself was curling right off the wood substrate. And the later-painted layer was separating from the original gilded layer. To complicate matters, there was a layer of dust almost 2 mm (1/16th inch) thick.

The flaking was so severe the object couldn't be handled. Webb had to consolidate the flakes before she could do any cleaning. The trick was to get the glue under the surface to adhere each flake without gluing down the dirt. She cleaned each flake with a microfibre brush smaller than a cotton swab. She also re-attached the feet and glued the many gaps between the wood sections.

The final stage of treatment was of a very distinctive feature—Guan Yu's rather long moustache made of horsehair. The beard was washed before the sculpture went on display.

Because it has been in storage for many years, the Guan Yu is the only sculpture in the ROM's collection that has not been waxed. You can still see the light pastel colours and their matte surface, similar to that of the wall paintings in the Bishop White Gallery.

A fitting clean-up for the majestic return of such a revered figure after almost a lifetime out of sight.

Douglas Converse has a keen interest in conservation and has worked with ROM conservator Marianne Webb on her book Lacquer: Technology and Conservation.

Glass Menagerie

There have been many imitators of Lalique glass, including the successful Edmond Etling.

Dear ROM:

Recently, my mother gave me a glass vase that I have always enjoyed. It is made of opalescent glass with a bluish tint. The relief pattern shows chestnut leaves and chestnuts emerging from their prickly casings. The vase is 18 cm (7¼ inches) tall and has a maximum diameter of 14.5 cm (5¾ inches). On the bottom of the vase in upper-case letters raised in relief are the words "ETLING FRANCE." To me, the vase looks very much like Lalique glass. My mother told me that it was a wedding gift to her when she was married in Toronto in 1941. Can you provide any further information on this vase?

J. K.,
Montreal, P. Q.

PHOTO OF ETLING VASE AND ITS MARK COURTESY CHRISTINE GUEST

Above: J. K.'s vase, mould-blown opalescent glass. French, marked "ETLING," c. 1920–1940. Probably produced at the Choisy-le-Roi Glassworks near Paris. H. 18 cm (7-1/4 inches). Privately owned.

Dear J. K.,

Thank you for your letter. It is very appropriate that you should write to ROM Answers now because the Museum has just mounted an exhibition of Lalique and related glass, which runs from December 2005 until January 2007. The exhibition *Déco Lalique* is drawn from the ROM's important glass collection, with only four loan objects—superb glass vases from private Canadian collections. Unfortunately, there are no examples of Etling glass at the ROM, and it was not possible to borrow one for the show. Your enquiry provides an opportunity to expand on an important aspect of the exhibition—the many imitators of Lalique glass.

René Lalique (1860–1945) was an important figure in the evolution of modern design. Originally trained in the classic French academic tradition, he spent time in the late 1870s in London, a hotbed for modern and industrial design. By the 1890s, he had established a reputation as a designer of exclusive jewellery and other articles, earning a gold medal at the Brussels Exposition of 1897, which resulted in the *Légion d'Honneur*. His jewellery reflected the Art Nouveau style and the style of the French Symbolist painters. His clients included prominent women such as actress Sarah Bern-

PETER KAELLGREN

hardt, who wore his jewellery on stage.

After 1900, in a quest for new colour and texture effects, Lalique explored glass, and by 1908 had rented a small glass factory near Paris, where he made perfume bottles for Coty and other exclusive French perfumers.

After 1910, Lalique began moving away from the luxury jewellery market. He developed his glass production to the stage that he purchased his own factory at Wingen-sur-Moder in 1919. In 1925, at age 65, he scored a major triumph at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. His pavilion, fountain, and other products at this major international exhibition were widely praised, and orders for his glass started to pour in from places as far away as Canada.

By the 1890s, René Lalique had already earned an international reputation for his work in the Art Nouveau style. He was one of the few *fin-de-siècle* designers who successfully evolved into the modern style that came to be called Art Deco in the 1960s. His glass was both an artistic and a commercial success. This was thanks to careful design—in which the relief decoration was sensitively integrated into the overall form of a piece—and to good quality control in the factory. Lalique built on the Japanese designs and naturalistic inspiration of the late 1800s as well as the French Classical and *Beaux Arts* traditions to create objects that are timeless and elegant. Such works were equally at home in modern and traditional interiors as found in the English country house or the Canadian home of the early 1900s.

During the Art Deco period, 1910–1939, Lalique glass was produced in a wide range of hues, with the signature colour being a translucent, opalescent white showing fiery orange or blue tints. Both colour and relief could be rendered more subtly by acid-etching part or all of the relief decoration and/or rubbing on a thin coat of oil paint as a form of patination.

Most pieces were manufactured by

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Top: Mark on the bottom of J. K.'s vase in relief-moulded letters. **Middle:** *Luminaire* (table lamp), mould-blown opalescent glass carp resting on a chrome-plated brass base enclosing an electric light. French, Marius Sabino, Paris, c. 1930–1940. H. 23.5 cm (9-1/4 inches). ROM Collection. Donated from the Collection of Bernard and Sylvia Ostry. Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board (CCPERB) under the terms of the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*. **Bottom:** Square ashtray, press-moulded opalescent glass. French, designed by André Hunebelle, c. 1927–1938. L (side) 12.2 cm (4-3/4 inches). ROM Collection. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls.

press-moulding and mould-blowing the hot glass with compressed air to form enclosed objects such as vases. These traditional French manufacturing techniques were developed in the early 1800s when opalescent glass was a luxury product. René favoured a *demi-cristal* with a lead content of 12 percent, about half that of conventional lead crystal. His son, Marc Lalique, continued the firm with great success following World War II. He introduced full lead crystal, eliminated most coloured glass, and designed new models, though a number of René's originals remained in production. Pieces made prior to 1945 usually bear the signature "R. Lalique."

The most important imitator of Lalique was Marius Ernest Sabino (1878–1961) in Paris. His firm made a full range of glass for electric lighting and architecture, vases, bowls, figurines, and tablewares in opalescent, coloured, and clear glass. He, too, exhibited at the 1925 Paris Exposition. Sabino employed a crystal formula with a low lead content and arsenic-based colouring to create an opalescent white glass with an orange-yellow fire that can be more intense than Lalique's. Factory production was interrupted by World War II but resumed in the 1960s with his son taking over operations. Small figures are the articles most often encountered. The ROM collection includes three opalescent pieces, a pale topaz vase, and a clear glass bowl. Depending on whether a piece was intended for domestic or foreign sale, it was marked "Sabino Paris" or "Sabino France."

Many collectors of French Art Deco objects and glass consider Edmond-Laurent Etling to be among the more successful imitators of Lalique. Information on Etling is scattered in the literature and difficult to locate. John Shearer, the foremost expert on Lalique and related glass in Canada, informs me that *La Société Anonyme Edmond Etling* was founded after World War I. Sometimes referred to as *La Maison Etling et Compagnie*, its premises were located at 29 rue de Paradis, Paris.

To judge from surviving pieces bearing the name Etling, the firm seems to have commissioned and retailed a wide range of high-quality decorator objects in the Art Deco style, including small bronze sculpture, often with carved ivory details; porcelain produced by leading firms

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

such as Sèvres and Robj; and glass. Both the Choisy-le-Roi Glassworks near Paris and the Cristalleries de St. Rémi de Reims made glass for Etling.

A number of artists, including Lucille Sevin, Geneviève Granger, Georges Beal, René Burel, and Hungarian sculptor Géza Hiecz, designed figures and vases for Choisy-le-Roi. These came in both opalescent and smoky grey glass. Mr. Shearer noted that Georges Beal designed a number of vases with plant designs. Your vase was likely produced for export because the marking includes the word "FRANCE." On glass, the Etling mark may be followed by a number, which relates to the Choisy-le-Roi catalogue, a book that I have not been able to consult. The Etling firm did not survive World War II.

Other French glass manufacturers such as *Daum Frères* in Nancy made some opalescent glass in the Lalique style during the 1920s and 1930s. One of the most intriguing imitators was André Hunebelle (1896–1985). Hunebelle's first collection of glass, exhibited in 1927, received wide critical acclaim. Some consider that his strong interest in mathematics produced designs that are more stylized and geometric than others of his time. He created vases, bowls, table glass, ashtrays, powder boxes, decanters, and decorative pieces in clear, frosted, and opalescent glass. The usual signature is "A. HUNEBELLE" with and without the word "FRANCE."

Hunebelle was a friend of Marc Lalique and, like Lalique and Sabino, he ordered moulds from Étienne Fanckhauser. In 1938, Hunebelle gave up his career as a glass designer, closed his shop, and became a newspaper administrator. He is best recognized today for his success as a film producer after World War II. He made numerous films—including *Millionaire for a Day* and *The Three Musketeers*—two of which won the *Prix du Meill*.

The ROM's glass collection includes examples of Lalique-style glass from a variety of non-French manufacturers such as thick glass tiles with

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Top: Finger bowl and underplate, press-moulded non-lead glass with acid-etched finish. "Barolac Glass," manufactured at the Inwald Glassworks, Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia), 1930s, for John Jenkins & Co., importers, London, England. D. (bowl) 11.8 cm (4-5/8th inches). ROM Collection. Gift of Mr. Godfray De Lisle. Certified by the CCPERB. **Middle:** Vase, mould-blown smoky grey glass with partial acid-etching. American, Verlys of America, a division of the Holophane Glass Co., Newark, Ohio, c. 1930–1940. H. 23 cm (almost 9 inches). ROM Collection. Museum purchase. **Bottom:** Vase, mould-blown opal glass, acid-etched surface with coloured enamels. American, Phoenix Glass Co., Monaca and Pittsburgh, PA, c. 1920–1940. The relief decoration imitates the Sauterelles (grasshoppers) vase designed by René Lalique in 1914. H. 19.1 cm (7-1/2 inches). ROM Collection. Museum purchase. Gift of Beatrice Fischer.

frosted reliefs showing "The Labours of Hercules" from the John Walsh Walsh firm of Birmingham, England; Phoenix Glass from the Phoenix Glass Co. of Monaca and Pittsburgh, PA, with mainly opaque alabaster white vases with muted enamel colours in the reliefs; products of the Verlys Holophane Company of America; and Moser crystal from Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia)—a thick, green marbled glass, imitating malachite, that was made in the 1930s and has recently been revived.

There were many versions of glass with an acid-etched frosted surface made in the 1920s and 1930s. Notable among these was Barolac glass manufactured at the Inwald Glassworks, Czech Republic, for John Jenkins & Company, importers of ceramics and glass in London, England. Apparently the Barolac designs were created in England. They tend to be busier and more naturalistic than Lalique. Carolyn Hatch, author of *Déco Lalique* (Royal Ontario Museum, 2006), and I have been able to find documentation for the import and sale of Sabino, Hunebelle, Phoenix, Moser, and Barolac glass in Canada. Glass with relief decoration and a matte acid finish still appeals to contemporary consumers, and factories in Indonesia and other places continue to produce examples.

Books and articles on the imitators of Lalique glass are not easy to locate. It is likely that I have missed some information. The Lalique glass and a number of the imitations in the ROM collection, however, are documented in Carolyn Hatch's book, which helps place Lalique glass into a design context for the 20th century and explains how Lalique and modern design were marketed in Canada during the 1920s and 1930s.

Thank you for sharing your family heirloom with our readers. It is a pleasure to see an interesting example of Etling glass.

Peter Kaellgren is curator of European Decorative Arts in the ROM's Department of World Cultures.

BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

BONE LEADER

Hsu: Interpreter of the ROM's oracle bones—the fortune tellers of yore.

COURTESY ROM ARCHIVES

WHEN WE THINK of the ROM and how it began, certain names readily come to mind: Currelly, Samuel, Parks, White, and Crofts, among others. Yet, the work of these men was supported by many unsung heroes, without whom the ROM would not be what it is today.

One of these unsung scholars was James Hsu, a researcher who catalogued the ROM's important collection of just over 8000 Chinese oracle bones. Much of this collection was donated by the Rev. Dr. James M. Menzies and Bishop William Charles White (see "Man on a Mission," page 14). Menzies's sizable collection of oracle bones was bequeathed to the ROM with the proviso that a scholar be hired to study and publish it. James Hsu was that scholar.

The unusual carved bones were used in the Shang dynasty (16th to 11th century BCE) to foretell future events. A question was carved into a specially treated bone; a diviner would then apply a heated rod to the bone and interpret the cracks that formed. The characters on these bones are the oldest known Chinese characters.

The photo at left shows James Hsu looking over a drawer of oracle bones in the ROM's Far Eastern Department study room. It probably dates to the early 1970s.

When I first arrived in the department in 1977, James was making rubbings—capturing each bone's inscription by tamping paper into the incised characters so that when ink was applied to the paper, it covered all but the inscription.

Through his many publications James was becoming known as a serious scholar of oracle bones and Chinese epigraphy. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of classical Chinese literature and an ability to read the most difficult characters.

It was a sad day at the ROM when he departed in 1998 to become a professor at the National Taiwan University in Taipei. But he did leave us important catalogues as well as a dozen books and numerous articles on this intriguing collection.

JACK HOWARD

Jack Howard is librarian of the ROM's H. H. Mu Far Eastern Library.

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